THE ADVANTAGES OF DELIBERATION.

THE ADVANTAGES OF DELIBERATION; OR, THE FOLLY OF INDISCRETION.

The life of a libertine cannot be known without abhorrence, nor ſhared without danger of ruin.

The ADVENTURER.

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THE ADVANTAGES OF DELIBERATION; OR, THE FOLLY of INDISCRETION.

LETTER XXIX.

Mr. BELLVILLE to Mr. MANWAYRING.

WE talk of returning to the *Wood* in a few days, where I hope to have the pleaſure of ſeeing you, according to your promiſe.

As the leaſt of my Camilla's deſires ſhall ever be complied with, I ac-

companied her to Brighthelmſtone; but why we hurried thither, and why we returned from thence in a week's time, ſhe only can inform you; nor can I learn what extraordinary pleaſure or ſatisfaction ſhe found there: her pleaſure there could not ariſe from the exhibition of her perſon, for ſhe ſeldom went to the rooms: ſhe declined play, and would not ſtay an hour in the ball-room. Her condition, indeed, will not admit of much exerciſe; but had ſhe been ever ſo able to bear it, ſhe would not, I am ſure, have danced. Neither could ſhe have received any ſatisfaction from her finery, for no woman was dreſſed in a plainer ſtyle; thoroughly elegant ſhe always is in the choice of her cloaths, but equally ſo at home or abroad. She has ever, indeed, complimented me in a par-

particular manner by dreſſing with rather more neatneſs, and making a greater variety in her appearance when we are by ourſelves, than when ſhe goes into the world: and as to the encouragement of admiration, no woman upon earth is leſs the coquette. Lively ſhe is at times to a degree which is quite tranſporting at home; but *abroad* ſhe always appears with a modeſt dignity, and a noble ſimplicity ſo ſtriking in her features, her manners, and her converſation, that while ſhe attracts the eyes of all beholders, ſhe inſpires them with awe. Unobſerved with me alone, how amiable, how enchantingly tender ſhe is! Why then, why ſhould ſhe, when her whole heart ſeems devoted to me, want to fly from place to place? With ſuch a dear lovely creature by my ſide, I

ſhould be the happieſt of men in my ſweet retreat: *her* ſmiles of contentment would render the dulleſt ſpot a Paradiſe. But though I doat on tranquillity, I doat on *her* ſtill more: every thing, therefore, propoſed by her, ſhall be agreed to by me. I love her too ſincerely, not to give up *my* pleaſure to *hers*.

LETTER XXX.

Lord CONQUER to the Earl of STANFIELD.

WHY the devil did you carry her to Ireland? Was not England large enough to hold you and your girl? but you are a lucky fel-

fellow, to prevail on her to leave every thing and follow *you! I* had not ſo much influence over my——— what ſhall I call her? How I deteſt the word wife! but I could not, you know, do any thing without the appearance at leaſt—'Tis true, indeed, there was no neceſſity for my marrying her again and again, as if I never could have enough of matrimony—But I was afraid—pox take my fears! that the devil was going to fly away with me—poor cowardly raſcal as I was.—You helped me into all this miſchief by undeceiving Lucy, and contriving her eſcape. However, as we have ſettled that old reckoning, I ſhall ſay no more about it; only I wiſh ſomebody elſe would carry her off with all my ſoul; and faith your brother Ned ſeems as buſy about her as any body: I ſhall let them alone,

and probably they may manage the affair when they find I don't disturb them. A divorce would be the very thing, for I am in love at this moment up to the ears, let me perish else, and with as fine a girl as—but nothing will go down except matrimony with *her* neither:—no, to be sure—"I would not live with a *man* for the world."—But I am got into such a d—d noose, that I cannot tip the parson upon her while my lawful wife, my plague, my torment, is above ground. Every body knows there is a Lady Conquer; she takes care to make herself pretty conspicuous. Such a handsome b—h cannot be hid if she were willing, and there are fellows enough to take advantage of *my* indolence: nobody minds the poor devil of a husband. If I once get out of this confounded scrape,

catch

catch me at marriage again if you can. However, it has happened well enough hitherto: if I can but take her in the fact with ſome of her flirts, if I do but get rid of her, I ſhall not value what is paſt. I muſt have had an heir, you know, ſome how or other: one likes to have one's name, &c. tranſmitted to poſterity, and I think I may venture to ſay this boy is my own; but as for another I could not ſwear to it, though my life was at ſtake. Women are ſuch curſed hypocrites that Old Scratch himſelf cannot outdo them in deceit; and *my* woman is as ready at double-dealings as the beſt of her fly ſex.—What a pretty ſoft *innocent* ſhe was when I married her!——Oh! d—n her.——But I ſhall watch my opportunity—Poſſibly Ned may do the buſineſs for me—Faith, I ſhall obſerve

him narrowly; the young dog's handſome, and he ſeems to long to be at her. She likes handſome fellows, or ſhe never would have liked me—Hey, Stanfield.

LETTER XXXI.

The Earl of STANFIELD to the Hon. EDWARD MOYLE.

I HAVE heard and ſeen ſo much of your indiſcreet attachment to Lady Conquer, that out of pure friendſhip I ſit down to adviſe you ſoberly and ſeriouſly to have nothing more to do there. I know very well that you will directly avail yourſelf of *my* paſſion for Biddy Floyer; but only think of the difference, Ned—

She-

She is under no engagement, and conſequently at liberty to give herſelf to me as ſoon as to any man—The caſe is widely different between you and Lady Conquer, who is the wife, and, of courſe, the property of another; and you may, with as much juſtice on your ſide, rob George's houſe, or pick his pocket, as ſeduce his wife from him. My affair is only a little ſimple fornication; whereas yours, my friend, is downright adultery. Beſides, do but conſider the prepoſterous folly of your proceeding: if you are not fond of the woman, why any other may anſwer your purpoſe every whit as well; and if you are, reflect, Moyle, on the diſtreſs in which ſhe muſt neceſſarily be involved by your dangling after her—Conquer, who ſuſpects you, ſwears he will ſeize every opportunity to catch you; and you know the conſequences which may probably

ariſe from ſuch a diſcovery: a heavy penalty, which your fortune can but ill ſupport, and utter deſtruction to the poor girl, who gives up fame, character, and every thing moſt dear to the ambitious ſex, for the ſake of a man, who will not, it is likely, be able to maintain her, when, on his account, alone ſhe has no other reſource left. Think of this ſeriouſly, Ned, and if Lady Conquer is only purſued by you from the love of variety, why will you not leave her for one as handſome, who may be eaſily found? But if you actually have a paſſion for her, ſhew your regard by letting her alone. She was an amiable artleſs creature when George ſtole her, baſely ſtole her, from her home; and though I believe ſhe really loved him, I dare ſay ſhe never would have yielded upon improper terms.

I was

I was, I confeſs, touched with her ſituation—Fond of the ſex as I am, you very well know, Ned, that I never went ſuch lengths as Conquer has done. I ſcorn to deceive any woman. Do *you* ſo far follow *my* example as to quit this unfair purſuit after the wife of the man whom you call your friend—after any *wife* indeed, and ſtart other game. Before ſhe was legally married to George, ſhe was free for you, for me, for every man; and had I not believed ſhe loved him too well to afford me any hopes of ſucceſs, I ſhould have, I fancy, attacked her myſelf. But at that time I was not quite in deſpair about Lady Camilla, and flattered myſelf that my deliverance of Lucy would be a great ſtep towards gaining her good opinion. Could I have perſuaded her to be my wife, it is my firm be-

lief that I ſhould have relinquiſhed all my follies, and have become a new creature. I loved her moſt ſeriouſly, moſt ſincerely; too well in truth to bear the loſs of her without the deepeſt regret—But as I could by no methods gain her heart, I endeavoured, by amuſing myſelf with other women, to forget her.

I have brought Biddy Floyer hither, but I have not taken the advantage of our intimacy, which every man in my place would have done. The poor girl, it is my real opinion, is fully convinced that ſhe has taken a wrong ſtep in leaving her family to go with me—Were I to attempt to ſeize what ſhe thinks ſhe ought not to grant, ſhe would certainly be very unhappy, as ſhe never has diſcovered the ſlighteſt deviation from that modeſty of carriage generally

rally to be met with in young girls during their noviciate in love matters.

You will poſſibly aſk me, if by leaving her family and friends, and flying with a man who never made any promiſes to give the leaſt ſanction to her precipitate elopement, exhibited any proofs of a virtuous diſpoſition.

Appearances are, I own, againſt her; but you muſt make ſome allowances for love, my dear Ned. The poor young creature lives, I will venture to affirm, only in *my* ſmiles: and her tender paſſion for me, which ſhe has not been able to hide, added, perhaps, to my want of paſſion for her, have hitherto kept me from plunging her into wretchedneſs, merely to enjoy a momentary pleaſure, without feeling my heart in uniſon to

to hers : ſhe is however extremely pretty and delicate ; ſhe has a good underſtanding, and has been politely educated. In ſhort, ſhe has every requiſite (high birth and fortune excepted) to recommend her as a wife. But ſhe is not Lady Camilla—Yet her innocent chit-chat amuſes me ; and as I am no way conſcious of having done her any injury, bating the blot upon her reputation, which it is ſtill in my power to wipe out, I do not, cannot, think myſelf ſo culpable as the man who tramples on all laws, human and divine, and tears a woman from her huſband and family, to drive her into eternal miſery and ſhame——Take care, Ned, art thou not too near being *that* man ?

LET-

LETTER XXXII.

The Hon. EDWARD MOYLE to the Right Hon. Earl of STANFIELD.

YOUR letter, my Lord, comes too late if it is deſigned to cure me of a paſſion for Lady Conquer, which can end but with life—I do not, however, infer from this declaration, that I am running headlong into the train Conquer is laying for me—No—my paſſion itſelf will be my great, my only ſecurity: for I too ardently doat on that dear lovely creature to be capable of doing any thing to injure her reputation or her peace, both which muſt undoubtedly ſuffer by the proceeding of which you are ſo apprehenſive. I am not the vile character you ſeem to think me

—Were

—Were I to believe this amiable woman capable of encouraging a propenſity, which diſcovers a man to be ſo loſt to honour, ſo regardleſs of the world and of himſelf, her conduct would extremely leſſen, if not quite eradicate every tender ſentiment in my breaſt in her favour. No, my Lord, I have never entertained the ſlighteſt thought of ſolliciting favours, which, on being granted, would render us as odious to each other as we ſhould be to the world; and whatever opinion your lordſhip may have formed of me, you are miſtaken if you think I could love any woman capable of deceiving ſo groſsly even the very worſt of huſbands. But though I would not wiſh Lady Conquer to act unjuſtly, merely to gratify *my* paſſion, I muſt ever love and adore her, *love* her for the beauties of

of her charming perſon, and exquiſite ſenſibility, and *adore* her for her innate modeſty and extraordinary patience under a treatment which would inflame moſt women, and make them the very worſt of wives. I muſt pity her, I muſt wiſh—nay, I muſt endeavour to alleviate her uneaſineſs; and by every allowed admitted intention, ſtrive to ſoften the ſeverity of her fate, and render it leſs inſupportable. Who indeed, poſſeſſed of the leaſt ſenſibility, can behold ſo lovely a woman ſuffering under ſuch mortifying neglect, brutality, and ill-nature, and not deſire to take every method to lighten the load of her domeſtic griefs?

It was a conſiderable time before I could obtain her permiſſion to attempt, by the gentleſt and moſt inoffenſive methods, to divert her attention

tention to ſomething leſs diſagreeable than what engroſſed it; and I could not obtain her conſent till ſhe ſaw me almoſt ſinking under the weight of the provocations which ſhe endured, to take any the leaſt cenſurable meaſures to remove or leſſen them—You are not to be told how heavenly a mind is united to a perſon uncommonly beautiful; nor how ſoon ſhe would be alarmed at receiving even the faſhionable gallantries from any man, who might be ſuppoſed to have tenderer motives than others for offering them to her—No—ſhe is all beauty and all goodneſs.

Is it probable that Lord Conquer, careleſs as he is of his morals and his health, ſhould outlive his charming wife? May I not venture to hope that I ſhall one day be bleſſed with the

the only woman on whom my ſoul doats?

Once, indeed, I fancied that I loved Lady Camilla; but now I find that I only admired her; and that Lady Conquer can alone give my heart that exquiſite happineſs for which it fondly ſighs. She alone, my Lord, can beſtow felicity on your

Affectionate

EDWARD MOYLE.

P. S. When I firſt ſaw this angel at Mr. Myron's, ſhe did not, I confeſs, appear to me in the light ſhe now does: whether her extreme baſhfulneſs, or her ſeeming attachment to Lord Conquer, whom ſhe undoubtedly loved, while he behaved tolerably

rably to her, kept down thoſe charms which now blaze out in their full luſtre, I cannot pretend to ſay; but this I know, I am abſolutely dazzled with them at preſent.

I cannot help ſmiling at your account of poor Biddy; yet I honour you, my Lord, for ſparing a girl who has no other fault upon earth (you'll pardon me) but her paſſion for your lordſhip.

LETTER XXXIII.

Lady CAMILLA BELLVILLE to Mrs. BURTON.

YOU ſay all that can be done has been done for the reformation of Moyle; but I am afraid he will be very ſlowly, if at all, reformed:

ed : he is, I hear, ſtill perpetually dangling after this lovely Lady Conquer, who is come out from her lying-in handſomer than ever.

It is very remarkable that Conquer, as ſhe has brought him a fine boy, treats her with more contempt than he did ; yet, I am told ſhe is breeding again.

What wretches are theſe men !—happy !—how happy am I in being united to one of a different turn !

My dear Bellville and I preſſed her to come and ſpend ſome time with us at the *Wood* ; but ſhe laughingly replied, " I don't think I can prevail on my Lord to accompany me, and though my huſband leaves *me*, I muſt not leave *him*, you know."

The excuſe was prettily delivered, but I wiſh Moyle may not be at the bottom of it.

Lord

Lord Stanfield's carrying Miſs Floyer to Ireland occaſions a great deal of converſation among us; and I have heard it whiſpered that it is believed he has a mind to marry her. All are ready to allow that her character was irreproachable before ſhe met with him at Ranelagh; and that her father, unlike moſt parents, is willing to pardon this one ſlip, conſiderable as it is, and take her home, if ſhe will return. If there were more fathers of this conſiderate diſpoſition, we ſhould not, I fancy, ſee ſo many women irretrievably loſt. The firſt falſe ſtep, though certainly but too often attended with dreadful conſequences, might frequently be recovered, if people could be found charitable enough to overlook a conſtitutional failing, at leaſt to give the indiſcreet delinquents a fair chance

to

to make the beſt atonement in their power for it by the propriety of their ſubſequent behaviour. I am no friend to rigorous proceedings of any kind, and dare aver that they often make bad worſe, by cruſhing the ſeeds of penitence growing in the boſom of the imprudent fair one, which might, if humanely encouraged, effectually hinder her from repeating her indiſcretion, and rendering herſelf ſtill leſs worthy of forgiveneſs.

I ſhall not be able to keep up ſo regular a correſpondence as I have done, becauſe my dear Charles expects a gentleman with whom he was intimate at Rome, and as he never was in this part of the country before, we ſhall, I ſuppoſe, frequently make excurſions: my Bellville will not excuſe *me* while I am able

to

to be of the party, I ſhall conſequently have but little leiſure for writing letters. He is a Mr. Frankly, a friend of Mr. Manwayring's alſo. When Bellville told me he was one of the handſomeſt men in the world, I replied, "Except yourſelf."

LETTER XXXIV.

Mr. BELLVILLE to Mr. MANWAYRING.

AFTER having been alternately elevated by hopes, and depreſſed by fears, I am permitted at length to tell you that my ever dear Camilla has preſented a daughter to me as lovely has herſelf. You may better ima-

imagine the joy which I feel upon this happy occaſion than I can deſcribe it: my joy too is doubled, as my deareſt, beſt beloved wife, is out of danger.

Frankly, whoſe admiration of my Camilla almoſt riſes to idolatry, helps me to nurſe *her* and the little ſtranger. I tell him that he will be the more expert when he is a married man, for having *rehearſed his part* at the *Wood*. He ſays he ſhall never figure in *that* character till he meets with a ſecond Lady Camilla, to play the love-ſcenes with him.

Lady Camilla is, I believe, indeed, unequalled in many reſpects; eſpecially in being unconſcious of her very eminent ſuperiority to the majority of her ſex. She does not diſcover the leaſt vanity; not the ſmalleſt *penchant* to coquetry.—How ex-

tremely pleaſing, and in how uncommon a way is this lovely woman! I cannot ſufficiently admire ſuch lovelineſs, accompanied with ſuch modeſty.

Will you not come and ſee us? Doubt not my ſincerity when I aſſure you that every ſatisfaction which I enjoy will be heightened by your partaking of it.

LETTER XXXV.

Lady CAMILLA BELLVILLE to Mrs. BURTON.

OF how ſhort a duration is almoſt every pleaſure in this life! and how ſoon is our vanity corrected when we ſit down, and in the gaiety of hour hearts, ſay "we are happy!"

O my

O, my dear Louiſa! after having been ſo many months thoroughly ſatisfied with the moſt amiable of men (for he is ſtill ſo) after having been bleſſed with the birth of a lovely daughter, who was received by her father with the ſincereſt delight—to have known what I now know—But I have ſcarce ſpirits to tell you—

Since the birth of my little Camilla, (for ſo her father would have her called) Mr. Frankly has been with us, and I have frequently given the child an airing with her nurſe.

We were in the poſt-chaiſe a few mornings ago, when the dear little wretch, as if knowing what was going forward, cried, and ſeemed ſo reſtleſs, that nurſe deſired to ſtop at a decent looking houſe, juſt out of the road, to aſk for ſome milk and water. Fond of my darling, I

made no objection to her requeſt.

On a civil woman's coming out, and aſking me to walk in, I conſented, tho' I can give no reaſon for my acquieſcence, as the drink for the child might as well have been brought to the nurſe. However, in I went, and ſeeing thro' the back window a pretty looking garden, I had a mind to ſtep into it. Curioſity was, you know, the ruin of our ſex from the beginning.

How ſhall I expreſs the ſurprize which I felt, when on looking over a quickſet hedge, I ſaw my dear, my beloved Bellville, with a fine boy in his arms, apparently but a few months older than my girl! A beautiful young creature, in deep mourning, who ſeemed to be not above ſixteen, ſtood looking on him with a kind of tender melancholy; while he held her hand, and fre-

frequently kiſſed the child. Let any one imagine what I felt. I could hardly believe myſelf awake—and even now, when I reflect on Bellville's ſollicitude and tenderneſs about me in the painful hour, when he became a *father* to *my* child (for he was undoubtedly one ſome time before) let any one, I ſay, only conceive what I muſt have felt at ſeeing him fondly preſs *that* boy to his face, and with the kindeſt looks, talk to his mother, as I ſuppoſed her to be, notwithſtanding her exceedingly youthful appearance. But has not Lady Conquer *ſuch* an appearance, though ſhe is conſiderably taller? There are mothers, Burton, at all ages.

This elegant, delicate creature, juſt before he went, ſeemed to feel much uneaſineſs at his leaving her, and

caught his hand to her lips with an expreſſion in her pretty countenance which I cannot deſcribe. My heart was ready to break at the ſight of a girl, who had, I firmly believed, deprived me of my dear huſband's affection; but I could not feel any propenſity to hate her: ſhe was ſo very pleaſing, there was ſomething ſo uncommonly lovely in her whole figure, ſomething ſo touching in the melancholy which overſpread her features at his departure from her, that I ſighed involuntarily at her diſtreſs, though, poſſibly, my own grief and diſappointment occaſioned every ſigh which I breathed.

I came home in a condition mortifying beyond deſcription.—I had not ſpoken a ſingle word in the chaiſe, and only watered my poor infant's face with my tears.

When

When the chaiſe ſtopped at the *Wood*, Bellville flew to take me out.

I ſtrove to hide my emotions—I hope I ſhall be able to conceal them. The concealment of them, upon this unhappy occaſion, is the only chance I have for the recovery of his heart, if it is not ſtrayed from me for ever; and I think I never practiſed diſſimulation ſo well—I am chiefly amazed at his pretending ſo much affection for me, at the ſame time that he has ſo ſtrong an attachment in another place——Oh men!—men!—who can develop their deſigns!—In whom ſhall we find ſincerity?——I have no ſpirits to proceed.

In Continuation.

I take breath again.

Things are not ſo bad, my dear, as I had apprehended. I had patience to watch Bellville for ſeveral days, without diſcovering either my ſuſpicions or my fears—You muſt imagine what it coſt me to ſuppreſs them.

I was a little encouraged by his not offering to leave me : he cannot ſurely be ſo prodigiouſly attached to a woman whom he ſees ſo ſeldom : he might make his viſits more frequent, without being ſuſpected, as I never aſk him whither he is going, and have often from choice gone out alone, leaving him to do the ſame, well remembering, Burton, to have heard you laugh immoderately at thoſe women who always like to have their huſbands pinned to their ſides. You recollect, I dare ſay, what Mr. Myron uſed to throw out upon the

the ſame occaſion; yet, in my humble opinion, thoſe women are generally the happieſt—And I am certain thoſe huſbands are the moſt deſirable ones, who, fully contented with their choice, preſer the hours ſpent at home to any others. It is a fact that Mr. Myron was ſoon weary of home, either from the natural reſtleſſneſs of his diſpoſition, from his love of change, or from his having indulged a violent inclination, much too violent to laſt long. I therefore reſolved to prevent Bellville from following his example, by making as much variety as I poſſibly could in our manner of living: and he well knows I have frequently left him when he appeared to be the moſt pleaſed with my company, and the moſt eager to enjoy it——But to come to the point.

When about a week had elapſed without my once miſſing him, I found in myſelf an inſurmountable curioſity to know the real ſituation of this lovely woman and her child; and thought of contriving ſome means to go to the place where I had ſeen them, unobſerved. My ſurprize, and the preſence of my nurſe, had prevented me from aſking any queſtions before; and I determined to make another viſit by myſelf, and enquire very minutely into the affair which had occaſioned ſo much embarraſſment and uneaſineſs to me.

Bellville, however, gave me no opportunity to execute my deſign: on the contrary, he began to fancy that I was not ſo chearful as I uſed to be; and, though I had kept the ſtricteſt guard over myſelf, he told me that he perceived a great change in me;

me ; adding, that he feared I was not well, and that I too closely attended to the care of my little girl—(for I am too fond a mother, Louisa, to suffer her to receive her nourishment from any breast but my own.)

The mention of that dear child struck me so forcibly, that I could no longer stifle my emotions. The tears fell from my eyes, in spite of all my endeavours to hinder their flowing. He caught me in his arms, and kissing me tenderly, said, "Nay, now I am sure *Milly* is sick, and you fret yourself to death about her."

I put him by as well as I could, but thought it not amiss to take advantage of that hint, and to return an evasive answer. I therefore made an equivocal reply with regard to the child's health ; but my kind Bellville expressed so much concern about

me, ſo much anxiety, leſt I ſhould hurt my health or my ſpirits, that I could not poſſibly act agreeably to my intentions for ſome time.

At laſt Frankly engaged his friend out one morning; and I, to prevent ſuſpicion, ordered the poſt-chariot, as if I deſigned to take the air, but bade the ſervants ſet me down at a little cottage a few yards diſtant from the houſe I wanted, and to call for me in about half an hour.

I then haſtened to the houſe from whence I ſaw the killing ſight above deſcribed, under the pretence of repaying the miſtreſs of it for her civility to me, with whom I ſoon entered into converſation about her family and manner of life, till, by degrees, I inſenſibly introduced her neighbours, and with the moſt careleſs air I could aſſume, aſked her who

that

that pretty woman was with her child, whom I had ſeen from her garden?

"Oh! dear madam," ſaid ſhe, "they are very unhappy people; it is a charming boy, but that young lady is not his mother, his mother is dead, and that is her ſiſter: they were two handſome young women, well brought up; but their father, Mr. Weſtly, could give them nothing when he was alive, nor leave them any thing when he died, which happened juſt before the birth of this boy: but though they had no money they were both very handſome, and a young gentleman of fortune took a fancy to the eldeſt, and married her privately. Being ſent abroad, ſoon afterwards, by his father, he left her to the care of a friend, and that friend was him whom your ladyſhip ſaw play-

playing with the child that day, of whom he is very fond, which friend, as ſoon as Mr. Weſtly died, placed the two ſiſters in that houſe, with a ſervant to attend them, where the eldeſt lay in, and died ſoon after, leaving her ſiſter, quite a girl, without a ſingle perſon to take care of her but that friend, till Mr. Medley ſhould return, who died alſo abroad: ſo that poor Miſs Weſtly lives a very melancholy life here, ſhunned by every body, as I believe moſt people thinks ſhe is the gentleman's miſtreſs, who now and then viſits her, but I dare ſay ſhe is as innocent as I am; yet people will judge according to appearances, madam."

This narrative, told in ſo plain, yet ſatisfactory a manner, by the good woman, who was a degree in life above the lower ſort of cottagers, pleaſed

pleaſed me very much. I reſpected her for not being too ready, like the malicious part of the world, to judge hardly of people under misfortunes, and to look upon every body and every thing in the worſt light; but it was highly neceſſary for me, I thought, to have this affair thoroughly cleared up, and my honeſt intelligencer's ſtory authenticated.

I therefore affected not to credit her, when ſhe warmly ſtood up in defence of Miſs Weſtly's character: but after having aſked a number of queſtions, ſaid, that I thought the gentleman I ſaw with her, appeared not only fond of the child but of the young lady, and *ſhe* of *him*.

"No, indeed Madam," replied my informer, "were you to hear and ſee as much of them as I have, you would not believe any otherwiſe

than I do. He comes but ſeldom; never ſtays; is almoſt always either in the garden or in a parlour, where the windows and doors are open for every body to ſee. And as to her, ſhe declares ſhe owes every thing to him, and looks up to him with that reverence and reſpect ſhe would to her preſerver, as the moſt benevolent of men, as he is good and generous, without expectation of reward. Theſe are her very words, madam: ſhe can can talk very well, being always reading a number of books, and then ſhe ſings ſometimes like any nightingale."

When I had got all the intelligence I could, I returned home with my head full of my generous Bellville's care of theſe unfortunate people: yet I could not help thinking, poſſibly prompted by a little jealouſy, ſtill

ſtill lurking in my breaſt, that the extreme youth and beauty of Miſs Weſtly, added to her condition, were ſufficient to tempt any man to take advantage of that ſituation, and indeed to put my Bellville's fidelity to a ſmart trial. I could not help thinking alſo, that while ſhe remained thus alone under his protection, both *her* and *his* reputation were injured: *his*, as he lay under the ſcandal of keeping a miſtreſs, and *hers*, in being kept. Neither did I think that her retreat would prove an eligible place on its being diſcovered, but how to remove her from it I was very much at a loſs. The point to be ſettled was a nice one, and no ſmall delicacy was required in the management of it. To have urged Bellville to ſend her to ſome diſtant ſpot, and by ſo doing to put it out of his power to aſſiſt

aſſiſt her, in circumſtances additionally diſtreſsful, would have been cruel: and yet her living where he could ſee her continually, without my being acquainted with what paſſed between them, was alarming to my heart. How could I be ſure that he would be always proof againſt frequent and uninterrupted converſations with ſo fine a girl! Beſides, he had not mentioned a ſyllable of this affair to me. I therefore reſolved (though I would not adviſe any woman to be angry with her huſband) to draw up a little on his want of confidence in me.

Accordingly, as ſoon as I came home, I put on, before Bellville, an air of unuſual indifference, which in an hour or two operated agreeably to my wiſhes. I at firſt appeared rather negligent of him. When he

ſeized

ſeized my hand, I drew it back in a hurry, and when he attempted to kiſs me, broke from him, ſeemingly quite engroſſed by ſome trifle or other.

At length he ſaid, "My dear Camilla, what's the matter with you? I have certainly done ſomething that you do not approve of, or you are very capricious to-day."

"I allow the juſtneſs of your firſt conjecture readily," ſaid I.

"I am extremely ſorry," replied he, taking hold of my hands, "to hear you ſay ſo; but what have I done to occaſion this cruel change in your behaviour? If you will not tell me my fault, my love, how ſhall I mend it?"

"Perhaps you may not look upon what you have done to occaſion it in a cenſurable light," ſaid I: "perhaps

haps you may have no deſire to remove the cauſe of my uneaſineſs."

"What injurious ſurmiſes are theſe? If you know my heart, you muſt alſo be aſſured that I am exceſſively pained at being thought to have ſaid or done any thing to merit *your* diſapprobation."

"*My* diſapprobation," Mr. Bellville, replied I, "is not of ſo much conſequence as *that* of the world. We ſhould not only avoid the commiſſion of evil, but carefully guard againſt the ſlighteſt appearance of it: for how often is *character* ruined and *peace* deſtroyed by unfavourable appearances! When we do not pay a ſtrict regard to reputation in the *pureſt* ſenſe of the word, we are generally careleſs about our actions, and that careleſſneſs drives us into indiſ-

indiſcretions, if not immoralities—"

"And to what does all this tend, my dear," ſaid he, interrupting me, "why ſo much ſerioufneſs in your features? And what means the ſolemnity of your Mr. Bellville? Why am I not your dear Charles? Would a leſſon of morality have leſs effect, do you imagine, upon me, prefaced by thoſe endearing monoſyllables?"

"Pſhaw," ſaid I, ſmiling, and puſhing him gently from me, "I was engaged upon a very ſerious ſubject, and therefore I believed that a ſolemnity of aſpect and language were highly proper to give dignity to my deſign."

"You are a dear charming creature," anſwered he, fondly kiſſing me, "what never-ending variety! You don't appear to me the ſame woman two hours together, and yet are

always

always moſt uniformly good and agreeable."

"Not more ſo than the lovely Miſs Weſtly," ſaid I ſmiling on him, while I watched every turn of his features.

"Miſs Weſtly!" replied he, a little ſurprized, "what, do you know poor Griſſy Weſtly, my dear? Pray how long has ſhe been honoured with your acquaintance? She would, I am ſure, think herſelf very happy to be under *your* protection."

"Are you ſerious, my dear Bellville," anſwered I, tranſported to ſee him ſo calm and undiſturbed at a diſcovery which I feared might have ruffled him.

"Yes, I am, by all that's good. This poor girl and her ſiſter were left to my care by a friend, who is ſince dead. His wife too, the ſiſter of Griſſy, is alſo dead: Griſſy therefore re-

remaining with a little nephew in a very diſtreſsful way, friendſhip, honour, and humanity, all demand powerfully my aſſiſtance, and I have aſſiſted them."

"I commend you highly for your kindneſs to them," ſaid I, "but why have you ſhewn it in ſo clandeſtine a manner? Had you made me your confidant upon the occaſion, you would not have found me leſs willing than yourſelf to diſcharge your friend's truſt with the ſtricteſt honour, and to be generous to thoſe whom he left behind in ſtraitened circumſtances."

"I believe you, my Camilla—but during my friend's life, I judged it ſo neceſſary to be ſecret, leſt his family ſhould be alarmed, that I have ſince been ſo from habit. I am now trying to make his father ſo far reconciled to his marriage as to allow ſomething

for the maintenance of the child, and I hope to be a ſucceſsful advocate; but I own I am utterly at a loſs to know what to do with poor Griſſy, as her youth, her agreeable perſon, and her total want of money, may ſubject her to numberleſs inconveniencies. To leave her deſtitute of a ſubſiſtence will be cruel, and—"

"Stay," ſaid I, "let me conſider."

I thought immediately of you, my dear—"Perhaps," ſaid I, "Mrs. Burton may be able to recommend her to ſome lady who likes to have a genteel young perſon about her by way of companion; in which ſituation, at a diſtance from the place where ſhe has been unjuſtly ſuſpected, ſhe may remain free from aſperſions. Till we can ſo provide for her, let her be with me. As to the boy,

you

you may put him to nurſe among the tenants.

Bellville ſeemed delighted with my propoſal, begged me over and over to pardon his unneceſſary ſecrecy about an affair which by no means required it, and aſſured me that he never more would conceal the moſt trifling incidents in which he had any concern.

To confeſs the truth, Burton, the pleaſure which he diſcovered at my deſiring him to take this fine young girl home, rouzed ſome ſuſpicions which were rather diſquieting—However, I ſincerely hope, nay, I am willing to believe, that my amiable Charles has been attached to *me* alone ſince the union of our hands—But the way to keep him ſo—there's the point—Shall I not, by urging him to bring this delicate creature under our

roof, be anſwerable for any indiſcretions which may ariſe between them? —I flatter myſelf I ſhall not, for my motive is a laudable one. I am loth, my dear, to trouble you, or any of your friends, with a perſon whoſe carriage is not perfectly diſcreet, and whoſe conduct is not unexceptionable—Beſides, if my dear Bellville eſcapes with honour from this fiery trial, I ſhall feel triumphant ſenſations, and look upon his conjugal virtue to be impregnable. However, why ſhould I imagine that his fidelity is capable of being ſhaken? —Somebody, indeed, ſays ſomewhere, that *opportunity* and *importunity* are the devil! They certainly produce a great deal of miſchief in the world; but this girl can never ſurely think of the *one*, and I'll take care that no harm ſhall ariſe from the *other*.

LET-

LETTER XXXVI.

From the SAME to the SAME.

YOUR laſt letter, my dear friend, was particularly welcome to me, by aſſuring me of your extreme readineſs to ſerve a fine young creature, deſtitute of the means to ſubſiſt herſelf agreeably to her education; you give me a great deal of pleaſure.

I have had her with me above a fortnight: I like her vaſtly; the more ſo, as my Charles is entirely negligent of her.

When he brought her to me, he ſaid, "I put you, now, Miſs Weſtly, under the protection of Lady Camilla, and you will ſoon be ſenſible of the agreeable change in your ſituation.

A look of the moſt reſpectful gratitude to him, accompanied by a modeſt downcaſt movement of her eyes, was all her reply.

Mr. Frankly, who was preſent, ſurveyed her with great attention, and I took the firſt opportunity to aſk his opinion of her, when we were by ourſelves, as he is a man of taſte and ſenſibility.

He replied, that ſhe was, according to his judgment, formed in the higheſt ſtyle of beauty; and that if he was not very much deceived, indeed, her diſpoſition was as gentle as her countenance was pleaſing.

I was very well ſatisfied with his deciſion; I love ſuch ſimplicity. Lucy Bellville appeared with ſuch winning *naiveté* before ſhe became Lady Conquer, and indeed ſhe ſtill retains enough of it to render her very attractive;

tractive; though the diſſipation into which ſhe has fallen, from her improper connexions, have deprived her of a conſiderable part of it.

I find by your laſt that Lord Stanfield is inclined to do juſtice to the girl whom he has taken from her family. If the account which he has tranſmitted to his brother, be the real ſtate of the caſe, I ſhall think better of him than I have ever yet done.

Lady Conquer ſhewed me the letter when ſhe was down here for a few days—How came ſhe by his letters?—I found out the affair by mere accident—We were ſpeaking of Lord Stanfield. She then pulled it out: I copied it, and ſend you the contents of it under the ſeal of ſecrecy, becauſe they are worth reading, and becauſe I wiſh to know

if every particular may be relied on.

Lucy ſuffered me to tranſcribe it without any heſitation. When I returned his lordſhip's letter, I told her that Moyle muſt be upon a very friendly footing with her to truſt her with his brother's affairs.

She bluſhed exceſſively, and ſaid, ſhe brought it on purpoſe for me, becauſe ſhe knew I was very well acquainted with Mrs. Burton; who poſſibly would be kind enough to inform me what ſhe had heard of the character of Miſs Floyer, as Mr. Moyle would be glad to know that ſhe was deſerving of the eſteem which my lord had profeſſed for her. "Is he not a good creature, Lady Camilla?" added ſhe, "to be ſo anxious about the fate of his brother, who has, I believe, never ſhewn ſo much regard for *him*?"

Poor Lucy! had ſhe but married this inſinuating Edward, inſtead of my friend George, ſhe might have been both good and happy; but a bad man very often makes a bad woman, or at leaſt puts her ſo much into the way of temptation, that if ſhe eſcapes with her character unblemiſhed, ſhe has uncommon good fortune.

Return the incloſed copy as ſoon as poſſible, with all the intelligence you can pick up, and be aſſured I remain

Yours,

Moſt affectionately,

CAMILLA BELLVILLE.

LETTER XXXVII.

Lord STANFIELD to Mr. MOYLE.

Dublin.

YOU would have heard from me long ago, had I not been thrown into a ſituation entirely new to me, and very perplexing.

I told you in my laſt, that Biddy Floyer, unable to ſupport the dread of not ſeeing me again, had, half reluctantly, half willingly, conſented to accompany me hither; and that I never had been indulged in thoſe liberties which every man has reaſon to think he may take with a woman who leaves her family, to put herſelf under *his* care.

During our paſſage, which happened to be a quick one, ſhe was almoſt always drowned in tears.

As ſoon as we arrived here I took her a lodging at a convenient diſtance from my own, where I frequently viſited her, to contribute to *her* peace, as well as my own amuſement; and becauſe I was ſure of meeting with the moſt welcome reception from her, in whatever frame of mind I was.

Thus encouraged, I hoped I ſhould, ere long, have nothing left to aſk, nor ſhe to grant.

I was miſtaken; for as *I* grew more preſſing, *ſhe* became more reſerved. It is true when ſhe ſaw me look ſerious or diſappointed, ſhe endeavoured, by permitting a few innocent endearments, to revive my former chearfulneſs; but if, animated by that permiſſion, I offered to improve my endearments to my own advantage, ſhe as conſtantly drew back, and ap-

peared ſhocked to the laſt degree, at my preſuming to take freedoms ſo unbecoming, at the ſame moment declaring herſelf willing, by the languor in her eyes, to grant what ſhe nevertheleſs moſt obſtinately refuſed.

As I always abhorred uſing force, and ſaw very plainly, that ſhe loved me, I determined to let her alone, believing that ſhe could not hold out much longer, contenting myſelf with a few kiſſes, while I waited for more ſubſtantial pleaſures; which, though not allowed, I frequently ſeized by ſome means or other.

While I thus ſuited myſelf to *her* humour, ſhe became ſo irreſiſtibly pleaſing to *mine*, that I could ſcarce enjoy a minute ſpent out of her company.

I ob-

I obſerved, however, with inexpreſſible concern, that ſhe loſt her ſpirits, her appetite, and her colour.

In vain I tried to enliven her, by all the chearful ways in my power; in vain I ſtrove to ſtimulate her appetite, by procuring the greateſt variety which could be brought to table—She ſeemed to have no kind of deſire for any food: but I attributed her diſinclination to every thing ſet before her to her confined manner of living, as ſhe ſeldom ſtirred out, and never appeared in publick.

I therefore inſiſted upon her going out every day with me in my chariot.

She complied, but with apparent reluctance, and grew not at all better.

I often caught her in tears, and whenever, with all poſſible tender-

neſs, I urged her to tell me the cauſe of them, ſhe heaved a heart-breaking ſigh, and begged me to forbear, ſaying, that a perſon in her ſituation could never know peace.

I will confeſs that her ſorrow affected me; that her modeſt carriage touched my heart moſt ſenſibly—In thoſe moments I caught her to my boſom, and told her that every thing ſhould be done that could make her happy, if ſhe would but let me know on what her happineſs depended.

A freſh burſt of grief was commonly her only anſwer, while ſhe haſtily diſengaged herſelf from my arms.

During theſe ſcenes between us my heart felt all her diſtreſs: I ſympathiſed deeply with her, and became almoſt as melancholy as herſelf.

One

One day, coming into the room, I ſaw her reading a letter, which ſhe held in her hand, and ſhedding ſuch floods of tears over it, that I was abſolutely alarmed for her health, and intreated her in ſo earneſt a manner to let me know from whence her affliction aroſe, that, holding out the letter with one hand, while ſhe covered her face with the other, "There, my lord," cried ſhe, "read *that*, and ſee if ſuch a father has merited ſuch treatment from his unworthy daughter! But I will fly to implore his pardon, and ſhall lament my paſt folly to the end of my life."

I took the letter from her, and read what you will find incloſed.

Scarce had I gone through it, when ſhe ſaid, but with much difficulty, "I muſt go, my lord; I muſt leave you—May you be for ever bleſt with

with a woman who every way deſerves you! and may you never think of me but when you are inclined to pity a poor loſt girl, who, had ſhe never ſeen your lordſhip, could not have been tempted by any other man thus ſhamefully to abandon a parent, who had never behaved ſo as to have reaſon to expect ſuch unjuſtifiable uſage!"

I was ſo buried in thought, and reflected ſo deeply on what I had read, that I ſat ſilently gazing at her, till ſhe roſe haſtily from her ſeat, in order to pull the bell.

I then caught her in my arms, and begged her to be compoſed, and to liſten to me.

"This letter, my Biddy," ſaid I, "is, I will own, a very affecting one; but as the cauſe of it can preſently be removed, do not let it give you any farther

farther anxiety. You ſhall go to your father, my deareſt girl, but I will carry you to him, and aſſiſt you in baniſhing every anxious emotion from his breaſt. You ſhall as ſoon as poſſible be my wife, and in that character you will be more capable of adminiſtering comfort to your father than in any other."

"Your wife, my lord!" ſaid ſhe, "can you poſſibly be ſerious?"

"I am, by all that's moſt ſacred, my deareſt," replied I, ſtraining her to my boſom, and kiſſing her eagerly.

"O let me go—let me go, my lord—this is too much—I cannot bear it—you are too good—after what I have done, I am not worthy of being your wife."

"You have done nothing, my dear girl," ſaid I, holding her cloſe,

"but

"but what you was, I am willing to hope, prompted to by your love for me. Do you not love me, Biddy? Only ſay ſo, only confeſs the truth—"

"I muſt not anſwer you," replied ſhe, ſighing. "It will be no proof of my love to hurt the dear object of it—No, my lord, I beg you will let me go—I can never conſent to what you have ſo generouſly propoſed.—Is a girl without birth, without fortune, with a blot upon her reputation, which was the only treaſure ſhe had to boaſt of, by having left her father's houſe——is ſuch a girl fit to be *your* wife?—Oh—no!"

"Yes, my deareſt," ſaid I, "as ſhe left her family only becauſe ſhe could not bear to part with me, ſhe is, I think, the only perſon whom I ought to love: ſhe is, I am ſure, the only

only perſon whom I ever *can* love. To-morrow, therefore, this affair ſhall be finiſhed. We will then go to your father."

I left her as ſoon as I could prevail on myſelf to quit the room; though ſhe, to the laſt moment, ſtrenuouſly oppoſed my intentions: but I poſitively inſiſted upon her making the neceſſary preparations for the performance of the marriage ceremony on the following morning.

When I returned to her lodgings, the ſervant whom I had hired to attend her told me, that ſhe was in a high fever.

Never in my life was I ſo much affected.

I flew to her bed-ſide, and watched over her with the tendereſt ſolicitude.

She is now a little better, but by no means out of danger. I never

leave her a moment, but when decency requires my abſence; and ſhe, ſenſible of my love and concern, though incapable of ſaying much, frequently lifts my hand to her lips, and preſſes it with a grateful ardour, which pierces my ſoul.

If I loſe *her*, farewel to happineſs: there can be none for me without this dear amiable tender creature.

As ſoon as I found her ſo ill that I could not flatter myſelf with the hopes of carrying her over to England, I wrote a letter to her father, which you will receive with *his* to *her*.

I read it to her before I ſent it: ſhe could only expreſs the ſatisfaction which ſhe felt upon the occaſion by watering my hand with her tears.

Poor dear girl! how much has ſhe ſuffered for me! how ſhall I reward her!—if ſhe recovers—

I cannot write any more—my mind is quite diſtreſt—how infinitely dearer is ſhe to me now, though ſome traces of her beauty are flown, than when it ſhone in its full bloom!

Say ſomething by way of conſolation, if you can, Ned, for I am almoſt unmanned by looking on this poor, dear ſick girl, who has ſuffered ſo much for me.

Remember your afflicted, but

Ever-affectionate brother,

STANFIELD.

LET-

LETTER XXXVIII.

Mr. FLOYER to Miſs FLOYER.

(Incloſed in the Foregoing.)

HOW ſhall I begin? in what terms ſhall I write to a daughter who has forgot her family and her father's houſe, to go away with a man whoſe very ſituation in life muſt exclude all hopes of any reparation on his part, if ſuch a falſe ſtep could be, poſſibly, ever repaired?

Oh, Biddy! Biddy!—was it for this I took ſo much care of your tender infancy? Was it for this (cutting reflection) that I denied myſelf a thouſand ſatisfactions, that I might inſure the greateſt of all, by leaving ſome

ſome little matter to ſave my child from the dreadful ruin into which ſhe has voluntarily plunged herſelf? —Was it for this—thou dear reſemblance of thy beloved mother, only in form—that I gazed on thee with unutterable delight, and preſſed thee to my boſom with unſpeakable affection?—To have you fly from me at a time when your flight would be as deſtructive to yourſelf, as heavily lamented by me, at a time when I fondly, fooliſhly believed, that your mind was as pure as your perſon was agreeable! How very miſerably have I been miſtaken!—In whom ſhall I now place confidence, ſince my own child has deceived me?—But you have deceived yourſelf more.

The man with whom you have choſen to remove yourſelf from your father's protection, can only return your

your indiſcreet attachment to him by firſt exciting you to ſtrike a dagger to that father's heart, and then leaving you to remember with horror his cruel triumph over your virtue, covered with infamy, and ſmarting under the preſſures of indigence.

Yet I cannot—cannot, let you thus periſh, expoſed to the looſe and wanton appetite of every brutal libertine.

Undone as you are, you ſhall not be rendered more wretched by being quite abandoned to the complicated miſeries ariſing from want, added to the ſtings of a guilty conſcience.

Return, therefore, to me, my child, my poor ruined girl, and let us weep out the remainder of our lives together.—I feel myſelf a father ſo much at this inſtant that I can only ſay,

come, come immediately to me; continue no longer in the power of a man, who, whatever he may have ſaid or done to ſeduce you from your home, and from your filial duty, muſt now look upon you with the juſt contempt which you have deſerved from every one but from your

Still affectionate and

Compaſſionating father,

R. FLOYER.

LET-

LETTER XXXIX.

The Earl of STANFIELD to Mr. FLOYER.

(Incloſed with the foregoing one to his Brother.)

SIR,

FOR ſome time before your daughter received your letter ſhe had ſo ſeverely repented of having left you, that the recollection of her undutiful behaviour greatly impaired her health: her repentance, however, aroſe only from the concern which ſhe felt at being abſent from ſo good a father, and from the apprehended cenſures which might be levelled againſt her, on the apparent impropriety of ſuch a proceeding—I ſwear

ſwear by all that's moſt ſacred, that her perſon is as pure as her amiable mind——Would to heaven that I could ſay that ſhe was as well in health as ſhe is virtuous!

The anxiety which ſhe has for ſome time endured, on your account, added to your affecting remonſtrances, threw her into a fever, which alone prevents me from performing my ſolemn promiſe to marry her.

The ceremony ſhall certainly be performed as ſoon as ſhe is reſtored to my wiſhes, as ſoon as her health will permit.

I cannot expreſs what I have felt, what I ſtill feel, for her though I hope ſhe is rather better.

I am alſo exceedingly grieved at having been the cauſe of ſo much uneaſineſs to you, Sir; and wait with

the greateſt impatience to call you father, as I ſhall ever eſteem it an honour to be related to a man ſo truly worthy of that affectionate appellation, and who has ſhewn ſo much tender conſideration for ſo amiable a daughter, eſpecially at a time when ſhe appeared to you ſo undeſerving of it.

Be comforted, therefore, Sir,—Believe every thing that you wiſh about your dear Biddy, whom I hope very ſoon to preſent to you by the title of

Your very obedient,

STANFIELD.

LETTER XL.

Mrs. BURTON to Lady CAMILLA BELLVILLE.

I Return you the copies of the letters you tranſmitted to me, for which I thank your ladyſhip. Lord Stanfield's letter alone would have fully ſatisfied me with regard to his deſigns upon Miſs Floyer, had not his lordſhip himſelf diſſipated all my doubts concerning his conduct, before the arrival of your packet.

I had for ſome time heard it reported every where, that Lord Stanfield would certainly marry Biddy Floyer; but as there are a thouſand reports of this kind perpetually circulating about unmarried people, I gave no ſort of credit to the rumour:

indeed, ſcarce any attention to it, as I thought that I knew my lord too well to ſuppoſe that he would throw himſelf away upon a woman who had really fixed a ſtain upon her character; and I at the ſame time believed him to be more knowing in women than to be deceived.

At length I heard that Miſs Floyer was dangerouſly ill, and that his lordſhip ſcarce ſtirred a moment from her.

However, as many men entirely confine themſelves with their miſtreſſes, I looked upon that intelligence as nothing extraordinary.

To my great ſurprize, he came one morning to me in a violent hurry, and told me that he was ſoon to be married; adding, that as he waited for the recovery of the lady who had been extremely ill, I ſhould oblige

oblige him very much by maknghet a viſit now and then.

" You will pardon me, I hope, my Lord," ſaid I, not a little aſtoniſhed at the freedom of this requeſt, " when I tell your lordſhip, that I never viſit people whom I know nothing of."

" As you will know her undoubtedly," replied he, rather warmed at my anſwer, " when ſhe is Lady Stanfield, I ſee no impropriety in your being acquainted *before* with her."

" Perhaps not," ſaid I, gravely, " but I wiſh your lordſhip would conſider a little, that by giving your title to a woman you can neither confer real honour upon her birth, or any other qualifications neceſſary to render her worthy of being *your* wife."

" It is quite ſufficient, Mrs. Burton," ſaid he, with a fierceneſs which he ſeemingly wiſhed to moderate, though he found no ſmall difficulty in reining it in, " that I know her to be a woman of the ſtricteſt honour, with qualities which would adorn a higher ſtation than I can raiſe her to ; and as to her birth, where ſo much merit is ſo conſpicuous, birth is very unneceſſary, and can give but a mighty empty ſatisfaction."

That her tender, though modeſt, affection for me, has injured her in the opinion of thoſe women, whoſe virtue, with all their parade about it, is perhaps extremely diſputable, I am not to learn : but when a woman's virtue has been ſeverely tried, when it has ſtood firm againſt the ſtrongeſt attacks, even when ſhe has had all the reaſon in the world to believe that

that her reputation was entirely loſt, its purity is unqueſtionable. I ſhall not, therefore, court you any longer to become acquainted with a lady whoſe ſociety would do you honour, becauſe ſhe is poſſeſſed of that intrinſic merit which is aſcribed to ſo many women, juſtly aſcribed to ſo few. But be aſſured, if you decline this invitation, you will never ſee me again."

"How, my Lord!" ſaid I, amazed at his infatuation, "can you reaſonably be diſpleaſed with your friends for ſhewing their diſapprobation of your marriage with a girl ſo far beneath you, and who, whatever ſhe is, has actually appeared here in the light of your miſtreſs?"

"Appearances are frequently deceitful," replied he, "and therefore ought to be as much guarded againſt, when evil, as the very actions themſelves—

ſelves--I think, however, madam, that my eagerneſs to marry this low-born girl, whom you affect to deſpiſe, may aſcertain her virtue better than a thouſand aſſeverations, becauſe I don't remember that I was ever looked upon—till this preſent moment—as a man ſo very eaſy to be impoſed upon. But whatever *you* chuſe to believe, I will ſtake my life in defence of her honour. She has, I grant, been guilty of a ſingle indiſcretion, of that indiſcretion I myſelf was the cauſe; for it was occaſioned be her love for me: the reflections which have tortured her mind ſince, have almoſt put an end to her life; and as ſhe is ſtill very weak and low, I had wiſhed for a lady of Mrs. Burton's underſtanding and converſible talents, to have aſſiſted me in trying to enliven her ſometimes; but

I have, I ſee, miſtaken my woman, and *once* in my life, I believe I may venture to ſay ſo, have been deceived."

With theſe words, pronounced with all the acrimony he could diſcover in the utterance of them, he roſe, and hurried towards the door.

I ſtopped him, and told him, that if he would name the proper hour, I would call and ſee the lady.

At firſt he looked ſullen, and was unwilling to ſpeak; but upon my addreſſing him again in a more obliging manner, he ſaid, "any hour, either morning or afternoon;" adding, that he ſhould expect to ſee Miſs Floyer treated as if ſhe was to be Lady Stanfield, as ſhe would have been before, if ſhe had not been taken ill."

He then walked away, rather with ſtately ſteps. In the afternoon, to

humour my haughty couſin, I dreſſed, and ordered my chair to Miſs Floyer's lodgings.

As I had no very favourable opinion of the perſon to whom I was going, I conſequently entered the room not in the beſt of humours.

How greatly was I ſurprized to ſee one of the prettieſt women in the world, only quite emaciated and ſunk with illneſs, receive me with the greateſt modeſty and politeneſs!

Miſs Floyer, now Lady Stanfield, is below the common ſize, but ſo elegantly formed, that you forget her want of height while you admire the ſymetry of her whole figure.

When I entered the room a beautiful bluſh overſpread her fair face, and made her one of the moſt *picturesque* objects I have ever ſeen.

Her

Her dreſs was ſuited to her perſon and indiſpoſition: it was plain, but genteely fancied. What aſtoniſhed me chiefly was the great humility of her carriage, and the polite but judicious deference which (during our converſation, in which ſhe bore a ſmall, though ſenſible part) ſhe paid both to my Lord and myſelf.

She is actually pleaſing beyond expreſſion: ſhe ſeems almoſt to adore her lover, who behaved to her with a manly affection, which made him appear to conſiderable advantage in my eyes.

When I roſe up to take my leave, after a viſit of an immoderate length for the firſt I ever made there, ſhe politely thanked me for the honour I had done her.

When my lord waited on me to my chair, he alſo made me ſome

genteel acknowledgments, which I returned, by ſpeaking what I really thought of his *favourite*; and ſo charmed him with what I ſaid about her, that he aſked me to promiſe for myſelf and Mr. Burton, to be preſent at his marriage, which was to be in a few days; adding, at the ſame time, that he would call on Mr. Burton, to ſecure him.

I made no objection to his reſolulution: if ſhe is all ſhe looks to be, he cannot be unhappy; yet I have known moſt fallacious outſides.

We have ſince been witneſſes to the ceremony, and they are ſet out for England.

Now to yourſelf, my dear Lady Camilla. How much do I approve of your having diſcovered no jealouſy nor uneaſineſs to Mr. Bellville on Miſs Weſtley's account. Had you diſ-

diſcovered ſuch emotions, they might have provoked him, as he was innocent, and could have been of no ſervice if he had been guilty.

"*My pride*, I know you will ſay, would have hindired *me* from taking notice of a huſband ſo circumſtanced."

Well—be it ſo—Pride is very neceſſary ſometimes.

I ſhall be extremely glad to have it in my power to ſend for your little Griſſy, but I have not yet heard of any thing which will ſuit her.

LET-

LETTER XLI.

Lady CAMILLA BELLVILLE to Mrs. BURTON.

WHAT a dreadful affair has happened! what a ſhocking ſcene!

Lord Conquer lies murdered by Moyle, and poor indiſcreet, unhappy Lucy, will not long, I fear, ſurvive him.

I ſcarce know how to begin a narrative, the very thoughts on which fill me with horror.

An expreſs arrived at Mr. Myron's, and another at our houſe, to let us know that Lord Conquer was dead, and that Lady Conquer was very ill.

We ſet out for London directly, after having queſtioned the ſervant

as

as to the manner of his lordſhip's death: upon which he told us that he had been killed by Mr. Moyle, in his lady's dreſſing-room; but that he knew nothing farther.

This information made me ſhudder; and I ſecretly accuſed my poor friend of having been actually guilty of a crime, which now I hope was only ſuſpected: fatal ſuſpicion! which has deprived Conquer of life, at a time when he was moſt unfit to die, and driven Moyle into baniſhment for having killed him. Few men indeed would have tamely endured the provocation which the latter received, and the wretched wife of the former will be for ever ſtigmatized as the ſole cauſe of this unfortunate affair; and it will indeed moſt probably occaſion her death, as ſhe is with child.

We

We found her ſitting in her chair, pale, trembling, and more like a beautiful corpſe than the lovely Lady Conquer.

As ſoon as we entered the room ſhe roſe, advanced towards me and her brother, who ſuffers extremely for her, and giving a hand to each of us, fell on my neck, without being able to utter a ſyllable.

Bellville ſupported her back to her chair.

When the firſt flow of ſorrow ſubſided a little, ſhe (looking on us both with a tenderneſs which drew tears from *our* eyes, while *hers* remained dry through the extremity of her grief) ſaid, "I am not guilty, indeed I am not, my brother—Indeed, indeed, my dear Lady Camilla, I am innocent of this dreadful cataſtrophe."

"Compoſe

"Compoſe yourſelf then, my dear Lucy," replied I, preſſing her hand, "you are very ill, you burn like fire: let me perſuade you to be put to bed immediately: quiet and reſt, will, I hope, reſtore you."

"Never," ſaid ſhe, "never: for though I have really committed no crime, I ſhall be ever thought guilty of a capital indiſcretion; an indiſcretion which has deprived my huſband of his life, which has deſtroyed *my* reputation, and which will be the death of the unfortunate Moyle, who will be condemned, like myſelf, for an action he never attempted."

"I don't underſtand you, Lucy," ſaid my Bellville, whoſe heart bled for her diſtreſs: "if you are not culpable, why do you accuſe yourſelf?"

"Hear me, my dear Charles," replied ſhe, "I will tell you in the beſt man-

manner I can what paſſed :—but my head is very bad yet."

I perceived that ſhe was exceedingly out of order, and perſuaded Bellville to make her poſtpone her relation till another time; but ſhe inſiſting upon clearing herſelf as well as ſhe was able, we attended ſilently to her account, which ſhe delivered in the following terms:

" Finding myſelf very much indiſpoſed on the fatal day, I ſtaid at home, and gave orders to be denied to every body but to a few intimates: having dined quite alone, I went up to my dreſſing-room, and throwing myſelf upon a ſopha, fell aſleep."

" On a ſudden I was waked by a loud converſation between Lord Conquer and Mr. Moyle, cloſe to me, who ſoon drew their ſwords. My Lord

Lord fell, declaring, however, before he expired, that Moyle was not guilty of his death, as he had provoked him to *draw*.

" On the firſt ſight of their ſwords, I threw myſelf between them, hoping by ſo doing, to prevent miſchief; but Moyle put me by, and laid his antagoniſt bleeding at his feet.—The ſervants could not get into the room time enough to ſave their maſter, who died in five minutes.

" While ſome ran for a ſurgeon, and others were buſy about my Lord, Moyle (having firſt earneſtly charged my woman to take care of me, and to ſend for you both) quitted the houſe.

" From this time I can recollect nothing that happened, all was horror and confuſion.

" *Maldon*

" *Maldon* (her woman) took me out of the room when I recovered from my fainting, and never left me till your arrival."

Such was her dark account of a ſtill more dark affair. We inſiſted upon her going to bed; and as I ſat by her with only Mrs. Maldon attending, I aſked *her* what had paſſed.

" Mrs. Maldon ſaid that her Lady had not been very well all day, and had declared ſhe would ſee no company: but that not having ordered the porter to deny her to Mr. Moyle, who had been uſed to call pretty frequently, he was admitted as uſual; that after a very ſhort time my lord came home; that ſhe ſoon heard a great noiſe, and upon my lady's ſcreaming, ran up ſtairs, but came too late to be of any ſervice, his lordſhip

ſhip being dead; that my lady fainted in Mr. Moyle's arms; who, as ſoon as ſhe appeared, ſtrongly recommended her ladyſhip to *her* care, and ran out of the houſe, without being detained by any body."

You may imagine, my dear Louiſa, how this affair diſtreſſes us; and muſt take this imperfect account of a ſcene which has been attended with ſuch ſhocking conſequences, till I can procure a more intelligible one.

I am, indeed, as well as my poor Charles, half dead with terror and fatigue.

Mr. Myron is alſo exceſſively affected with my lord's tragical death, and with poor Lucy's very unhappy condition.

LET-

LETTER XLII.

From the SAME to the SAME.

WE have at length got a little farther intelligence about the dreadful ſcene mentioned in my laſt; but what we have heard has not rendered us more eaſy with regard to what is paſt, and what is, probably, to come.

Poor Lady Conquer continues very ill; and the letters of which I ſend you copies for your private peruſal, do not tend to make us ſo ſatisfied with her conduct as we wiſh to be.

She has ſeen them, though confined to her bed with a fever, in conſequence of her fright and a miſcarriage.

Dear

Dear unfortunate Lucy! how ſincerely do I feel for her!

My Bellville too is half diſtracted ſince the receipt of theſe letters. From the purport of them, there is but too much reaſon to believe that her thoughtleſs carriage (not to uſe a harſher epithet) occaſioned all this infelicity. Should ſhe recover, her character will, I doubt, have an indelible ſtain in it; for though Moyle was exceedingly culpable, no man, I think, would have gone ſuch lengths without great encouragement.

Theſe letters, though apparently written with a deſign to remove all the blame from *her* to himſelf, ſhew too plainly (as he could no more conceal his paſſion for her than his terrors on her account) that there muſt have been a ſtrange inattention to propriety in her conduct,

duct, if not a ſtrong propenſity to giddineſs. No man, after having killed a lady's huſband, would dare to write to her and to her brother, without being very well aſſured that the lady at leaſt would give his epiſtle a favourable reception —though he would not have you imagine that he thinks ſo—

But let theſe extraordinary pieces ſpeak for themſelves—

LET-

LETTER XLIII.

The Hon. EDWARD MOYLE to the Right Hon. Lady CONQUER.

(This and the following Letter were incloſed in the foregoing one.)

HOW ſhall I venture to addreſs you, madam, with the hand which has ſo lately but ſo unwillingly deprived him of life who ought to have been dear to you, could he have deſerved the poſſeſſion of ſuch an angel!

I will not, however, diſturb the aſhes of the dead, nor force you to reflect upon the failings of a huſband, which ſhould be, with that huſband, buried in oblivion. Nor ſhould I have hinted at them at all but in my

own juſtification, for having preſumed to look upon you with eyes of love while you was the wife of another. To behold you with thoſe eyes I was encouraged by the licentiouſneſs of his way of life, and unmerited indifference which he diſcovered in his behaviour to the lovelieſt of women: I was encouraged alſo to believe that he could neither enjoy that life long, nor, while living, deſerve the warmth, the ardent affection, which almoſt every other man would have died to obtain.

Theſe, Lady Conquer, were my inducements to diſcloſe a paſſion which preyed upon my heart; but which, though it can never be eradicated during my exiſtence, ſhould have been concealed, had not the abovementioned inducements prompted me to make an avowal of it.

I never

I never meant to injure, never could I have believed myſelf capable of injuring any thing in the ſlighteſt ſhape belonging to *you*. Certainly I never could have thought of committing an action, which muſt, I knew, not only drive me from your preſence, but even deprive me of all future hopes, which I was at liberty to indulge before I unfortunately pierced your huſband's breaſt with a thruſt which ſtruck at his vitals: for unworthy as he was, the ſight of him in the agonies of death muſt have filled you with the moſt painful ſenſations—But could a man who adored you like me, ſtand by tamely and ſee you inſulted, defamed, and abuſed in the groſſeſt language, and not vindicate you from his foul, unjuſt, and brutal aſperſions?—No I could not. Heaven, whom I dare to in-

upon this awful occaſion, knows the ſincerity of my heart, when I ſwear by all that is binding, that I had no ill intentions with regard to your ladyſhip, or to the unfortunate object whom I, in a luckleſs moment, deſtroyed. My extreme tenderneſs for you *would* have deterred me from lifting up my hand againſt Lord Conquer; and nothing but that impulſe which nature gives us for ſelf-preſervation *ſhould* have obliged me to draw my ſword in oppoſition to him, in his own houſe.

Pardon me, therefore, too charming Lady Conquer, and—if it be poſſible—do not too ſeverely condemn a man who is undone by his own folly, and who muſt ever deplore, with the deepeſt regret, a conduct, which, though perfectly unintentional, and conſequently not totally undeſerving

of

of forgiveneſs, might poſſibly have a very criminal appearance.

I ſhall ſuffer ſufficiently for that conduct by the cruel diſtance I am under a neceſſity of keeping from all my ſoul holds dear, and from the corroding reflections which will crowd into my mind whenever I think of the racking diſquietude I have occaſioned to *her*, to whom, notwithanding what is paſt, I ſhall ever remain moſt faithfully, moſt tenderly devoted, as long as I am able to ſubſcribe myſelf

EDWARD MOYLE.

P. S. I have ventured, madam, to write to Mr. Bellville alſo, that you may be cleared of any injurious aſperſions.

LETTER XLIV.

The Hon. EDWARD MOYLE to CHARLES BELLVILLE, Eſq.

Dear Sir,

AFTER having brought your truly amiable ſiſter into a ſituation ſo exquiſitely diſtreſsful, what can I ſay to apologize for my attempting to trouble you with a letter, which may probably make you ſtart, as if the very touch of it would produce more miſchief.

But with a heart ſtill beating with compaſſion for the afflicted Lady Conquer, I could not remain ſilent while her character is vilified by a thouſand ſlanderous tongues, and while ſhe is not unſuſpected, even by her brother and her friends. And

ſhould

ſhould I not deſerve infinitely more anguiſh than I at preſent endure, did I not make an effort, at leaſt, to exculpate her from calumnies which ſhe has by no means merited;—calumnies which my egregious folly alone has occaſioned?

That I have loved your charming ſiſter, ever ſince I became acquainted with her, I freely confeſs; and I poſſibly loved her more paſſionately than ever man loved woman: yet (I mean not to boaſt of my particular diſcretion, many men would, perhaps, have acted as circumſpectly, if inſpired by ſo pure an object,) I never took any improper advantage of the neglect, nay, groſſneſs and brutality of the man who had once ſhamefully ſeduced her. I could not, however, drive from my heart a paſſion, which from his lordſhip's irregularities,

might, I flattered myſelf, one day be legally gratified, pre-ſuppoſing myſelf happy enough to gain Lady Conquer's eſteem.

Animated by this proſpect, which ſeemed to me not a diſtant one, I ſtrove, I confeſs, to render myſelf agreeable to Lady Conquer: I ſo far ſucceeded as to find her repoſe a confidence in me; and to ſee her prefer me to thoſe who adored her, with perhaps not leſs ardour than myſelf; though they could not poſſibly love her with more ſincerity.

The confidence which ſhe repoſed in me, flattering as it was, could however give no alarm to her virtue; for I never offered to take any liberties, which might not, with the ſtricteſt propriety, be admitted by Lord Conquer's wife: nor could all my eloquence, only to obtain a ſingle

gle promiſe to beſtow herſelf on me when ſhe became her own miſtreſs, prevail. Bluſhes and averted eyes, with requeſts not to talk upon a ſubject which ſhe dared not to hear, were the diſcouragements which I received from her. And indeed her diſcouraging anſwers were ſo often repeated, accompanied with looks full of ſuch virtuous indignation, that they ſtruck me to the ſoul. They had ſuch an effect upon me (when I tormented myſelf by imagining they aroſe partly from want of inclination for me, as well as from diſcretion) that I loſt my appetite, could take no reſt, and began to feel myſelf very ill.

Then, and not till then, this adorable woman pitied me: ſhe not only pitied me, but was indulgent enough to diſcover her ſenſations in *my* fa-

vour, though neither my ill health, ſighs, tears, or perſuaſions, were ſufficiently forcible to procure me a permiſſion to declare *my* ſenſations in *hers*. She ſuffered me to ſee her—to be near her—no more indulgencies were granted.

To ſatisfy her angelic delicacy, as well as to expreſs my acknowledgments for her kind compaſſion during my indiſpoſition, I ſubmitted to every thing ſhe thought proper to require of me, and ſtrove to wait with patience till I might be authorized to ſpeak upon a topic that had engroſſed my attention.

In the mean time ſhe herſelf began to be out of order; and her illneſs naturally demanded, from a heart ſo filled with her dear image as mine was, all the tendereſt ſollicitude and

aſſiduities. And all were, I thought, too little; eſpecially when I ſaw her treated with rudeneſs or neglect, with coldneſs or contempt, by a huſband, who, by that behaviour, plainly ſhewed how very ſmall his regard was for her.

I frequently called on her to ſit with her when ſhe was not well enough to go abroad, for an hour or two; ſometimes read to her, and endeavoured, by every innocent method I could think of, to wile away the time, and to alleviate her uneaſineſs.

With that view alone I called upon her on that fatal day.

The ſervants told me my lady was in her dreſſing-room.

As I had been always accuſtomed to go up without ceremony, there was none, I thought, needed then.

I found her half reclined upon the ſopha: her lovely eyes were cloſed; her head leaned againſt the ſide of it; next to which ſtood a chair, in which I ſoftly ſat down, unwilling to interrupt her repoſe, as I hoped it would be conducive to her eaſe, ſhe having complained much of late of a violent head-ach.

I felt, I confeſs, a pleaſure I had never enjoyed before: to ſuch an exceſs was I tranſported, that while I gazed on her uninterrupted, I almoſt devoured her beauties with my eager eyes; till tempted by a little gentle ſigh, which heaved her ſnowy boſom, I raſhly ventured to lay my face cloſe to hers, and to taſte her balmy breath: my hands too involuntarily ſtrayed towards hers, though ſo ſoftly that ſhe did not diſcover my preſumption.

In

In this, I am ready to own, indiſcreet attitude, I enjoyed a more lively rapture than I had ever in my whole life felt; it was indeed too exquiſitely pleaſing to laſt.

I had not, I am certain, been five minutes in the room, before Lord Conquer entered.

At the ſight of me he ſtarted, and from that moment looked inflamed in the higheſt degree.

Advancing immediately to me, he ſaid, with the moſt taunting air, "And ſo Sir, I have caught you at laſt; and d—n me if I don't make you pay for it, and that d—'d b—h too my wife—

Then ſtepping back to the door, he cried—Tom—Spencer—Where are you all?—But nobody appearing (he was indeed ſo choaked with rage that he could not make himſelf heard) he came

came up again close to *me*, and staring at me, with a sneer, said, "And so that face and that figure have done the business—d—n her—d—n her—"

"Hold, my Lord," replied I, in a low voice, (for my lady was still asleep, to my great surprize, and I dreaded her being frighted) but with a resolute tone, "Lady Conquer is as free from guilt, as free from the intention of it as an unborn infant; nor does she know of my being here."

"Tell this pretty tale to another," replied he, with a grin of horror, "it won't pass upon *me*. Where are my people?—though I want none, my own arm will revenge my wrongs."

Having uttered those words, he drew.

"Stay

"Stay, my Lord," ſaid I, putting by his ſword, "were I guilty, I would be the firſt to give you an opportunity to do yourſelf juſtice, but——"

"S'death Sir," replied he, making a lunge at me, "I ſhall not wait your leiſure nor your leave."

At that inſtant the noiſe awake my lady. She ſhrieked and ran between us.

Terrified at her danger, I begged her to retire; but ſhe paying no regard to my intreaties, I ſtrove to put her aſide.

My Lord then, with the moſt barbarous fury, turning the point of his ſword from me to her, and calling her by a name too groſs to be repeated, I was, I confeſs, no longer maſter of myſelf.

To diſengage him, therefore, from an object a thouſand times dear-

er to me than my life, I cried "Come, my lord, I am ready for you."

He ran at me, and while I was endeavouring to defend myſelf, I unfortunately plunged my ſword into his body.

He fell immediately, ſaying "'Tis all over with me, Moyle; but I alone am to blame, as I obliged you to draw."

He could ſay no more, and in a ſhort time afterwards fetched his laſt breath.

My lady fainted away; but I ſaved her from falling on the floor, by catching her in my arms.

The ſervants, by this time, filled the room; while ſome flew to their maſter, Mrs. Maldon aſſiſted her lady. I ſtaid till life once more animated her lovely boſom; and then, preſſing

preſſing her cold hands in mine, and earneſtly recommending her to the care of her woman, left the houſe directly.

I may be ſafe by quitting the kingdom; but in no place will my peace of mind be ever reſtored, till I have vindicated the honour of the moſt virtuous of women, which has I fear been, through *my* folly and indiſcretion, too much calumniated.

Could I by ſacrificing my life recall what's paſt, I do aſſure you I would freely reſign it.—Let me therefore intreat you, Sir, to pity your ſiſter, and to clear her character; ſhe is truly deſerving of your warmeſt friendſhip and your kindeſt protection. Let the voice of nature plead for the moſt innocent, as well as the moſt amiable of women—If I can

but

but hear that *her* peace is re-eſtabliſhed, and that ſhe is generouſly treated by her brother and her friends, I care not what becomes of myſelf, as I now muſt not dare to hope for an event, which I once fondly imagined might have completed the felicity of my future life.

To your fraternal affection, Mr. Bellville, let me again, in the ſtrongeſt terms, recommend this dear, beloved creature, who cannot but be ever adored by

The wretched

The inexpreſſibly wretched,

EDWARD MOYLE.

LET-

LETTER XLV.

Lady CAMILLA BELLVILLE to Mrs. BURTON.

DIſtreſſes croud ſo faſt upon us that ſcarce are we recovered from one misfortune, when we are aſſaulted by another.

My poor unhappy ſiſter is, I believe, I am afraid, very near being a victim to the MANES of her Lord.

She might have got over the loſs of her huſband, ſhe might have got over a diſorder occaſioned by her terror and ſurprize; but ſhe cannot get over the loſs of Moyle.

His letter was given into her own hand. She was not, indeed, at that time, capable of reading it, being very ill; but we had no right to keep it from

from, her had we known from whence it came.

That letter, added to the certainty of its being impoſſible for her to admit him again, has had a fatal effect upon her in her weak ſtate.

The day after the receipt of it, I found it in her hand as ſhe lay in her bed, quite wet thro' with tears.

I aſked her what heavy addition ſhe had met with to her grief.

After a little heſitation, looking earneſtly at me, with eyes in which her approaching diſſolution was but too viſible, ſhe ſaid faintly, "I will not conceal any thing from you, my dear ſiſter; but I am not worthy," continued ſhe, graſping my hand, "of that affectionate epithet—I have loſt all claim to every creature's eſteem —to the regard of every being who bears

bears the leaſt reſemblance in point of goodneſs to my excellent relations."

"Why ſo, my dear Lady Conquer," replied I, "ſiuce you are, by your own account, and by Mr. Moyle's letter to Mr. Bellville, perfectly cleared from the imputation of any deſigned indiſcretion."

"I am, I am, ſaid ſhe eagerly—Moyle has generouſly cleared me—but he could not read my heart—he could not ſee that his image was ſo deeply engraved on it as for ever to render it a ſtranger to felicity. Yet indeed, my dear Lady Camilla, I muſt ſay, I believe I never ſhould have ventured to indulge an inclination for him, had I not been ſo cruelly treated by Lord Conquer. But I will not inſult his memory; I ought not to inſult it, for I was unfortunately inſtrumental to his death.—

Young,

Young, thoughtleſs, and too much pleaſed with admiration, I was introduced into the gay world with no kind and diſcreet friend to guide my inexperienced ſteps. You, however, gently warned me of the danger of liſtening too eagerly to the ſyren accents of flattery, to the ſoothing tongues of thoſe who ſpeak only to deſtroy.

" But my lord ſhould have been himſelf *that* friend: *he* ſoon growing weary of me, and ſoon runing after other pleaſures than domeſtic ones, left me, not only to my own conduct, but left me alſo among a ſet of wretches, who are ever infamouſly vigilant to enſnare the innocent and unwary. Among theſe men, my huſband's intimates, I diſtinguiſhed Mr. Moyle; who, in a ſhort time, I plainly perceived, behaved to me

in

in a very different manner, with an attention and with a reſpect, which, added to his fine perſon, and elegant accompliſhments, ſoon won upon my heart, and made the contraſt between Lord Conquer and him but too ſtriking for my peace—Yet I concealed my feelings, concealed every movement of my heart from him, till he grew pale, melancholy, and unhappy. Then——Oh!—then! Lady Camilla—let any woman who loves, and has the leaſt ſenſibility, place herſelf in my ſituation, and imagine what *I* felt.

"I loved—I do not—cannot deny it, and conſequently my tender compaſſion diſcovered itſelf; never criminally, yet perhaps imprudently.—— But it is all at an end.——I ſwear, however, by every thing that's awful, that I never was the wretched thing

Lord

Lord Conquer called me: and, if I loſe not entirely *your* affection, my dear friend, I will try to be ſatisfied with my lot; though, indeed," added ſhe, with a deep ſigh, "it is a hard one: for had not Lord Conquer ſtole me, in a manner, from my good, kind, loving brother, I might have been now happy—happy, with my amiable Lady Camilla."

I was exceſſively affected with this unfortunate creature's diſtreſs: what ſhe had uttered was ſo juſt and rational, that, though I ought, poſſibly, to have condemned ſome part of her narration, yet I ſtopped—wondering at my preſumption—Was I not nearly in the ſame ſituation? was I not wedded to a libertine whom I loved, and who left me at an early age; left me to my own conduct?—Had I not been providentially preſerved

ſerved, I might have been as indiſcreet as my poor ſuffering young friend.

From our examples then let every woman avoid the ſlighteſt connections with the man of looſe principles. Libertines may aſſume virtues which they have not; they may appear to be reformed, but who, without the greateſt temerity can put any confidence in them?—She who is raſh enough to truſt a man of a licentious diſpoſition will pay dear for her folly. Such preſumption will certainly be attended with undeſirable, very probably, with deſtructive conſequences.

In continuation.

The young, the beautiful, the amiable Lady Conquer is—no more. Death has ſpread a paleneſs over that

face which was once ſo blooming: yet is ſhe ſtill lovely—She was ſimplicity itſelf—Her eyes ſpoke the language of her heart—How mild was ſhe! how eaſy! how artleſs!—She was of too tender a frame to ſtruggle with an inclination, which wounded, fatally wounded, her honour, health, and peace.

Juſt when ſhe believed her end to be approaching, ſhe ſent to deſire Mr. Myron, her brother, and myſelf, to come to her.

I had not indeed long quitted the room, at which time ſhe ſaid, "Adieu my dear, dear Lady Camilla, we ſhall ſoon part for ever."

When we entered the chamber, ſhe was ordering her woman to ſupport her with pillows, that ſhe might (ſhe ſaid) be the better able to take her laſt leave of us.

At

At this affecting ſcene, my poor Bellville covered his face with his handkerchief to hide the guſhing tears, while he ſighed out, "Dear, dear, unfortunate girl!"

"Do not grieve for *me*, my brother," ſaid ſhe, "I ſhall ſoon be at reſt. 'Tis better to die than to live. But—I have ſomething to aſk of you——and of *you*, my good Mr. Myron, my worthy neighbour in my happier days—Sit down by me while I am able to ſpeak ſo as to be underſtood. Let me intreat you—let me conjure you to take my poor infant ſon under your protection—let him be brought to me," added ſhe faintly, turning her eyes to Maldon, who attended.

"Thank heaven I have not a daughter, to be *one* day as I am now!"

" Dear little fellow!—He will ſoon be an orphan; but he may never have reaſon to repine at his being ſo, if you, my honoured friends, will kindly condeſcend to undertake the care of him.—I am not, however, ſo anxious about his life, or his health, as I am about his principles.—Let him, my uncle, and my brother, be very early taught to ſhun the vices of his father, and the indiſcretion of his mother.—Above all, teach him not only to avoid every criminal purſuit, but every thing that has even a criminal appearance; and tell him, when he has ſenſe enough to feel what he hears, that his mother loſt her life for being ſuppoſed guilty of an action, the bear idea of which chilled her with horror.

" My poor boy!" continued ſhe, kiſſing the child, who laughed, dear little

little innocent, quite pleaſed with his expiring mother's careſſes—Then bidding Maldon put him into his uncle's arms, "There, my dear friend, my Charles, my beſt of brothers," cried ſhe, "receive this laſt pledge of your ſiſter's affection—but I diſtreſs you too much."

"I cannot ſpeak to you, Lucy," ſaid my Bellville, almoſt ſuffocated with his ſighs, "but your child ſhall, I ſwear to you, be as dear to me as my own."

"I know he will, I know he will," replied ſhe; "my excellent Lady Camilla confirms what you ſay with her eyes—but do not weep for me—you ought rather to rejoice at my going to be releaſed from a world full of trouble and miſery. Farewel—I cannot ſay any more—only that I die in charity with every body."

This laſt expreſſion we conſtrued into a forgiveneſs with regard to Moyle; though ſhe, out of delicacy, no farther explained her meaning.

She then deſired to be laid down, and begged us all to leave her; declaring, that ſhe choſe to be left to her own thoughts.

Mr. Myron and I roſe up, though reluctantly, to depart.

Bellville ſtill lingering behind, ſhe caught his hand, and preſſing it affectionately to her lips, ſaid, "How hard it is to part with thoſe we love! Oh! my brother!"— and expired.

As none of us believed that ſhe was quite ſo near her diſſolution, the ſhock was the greater.

I hurried Bellville out of the room, but did not atempt to ſay any thing to him by way of conſolation, till the violence of his ſorrow began to be abated

abated—Bellville's paſſions are not of the tumultuous kind, nor do they vent themſelf in noiſy complaints: I fear, therefore, that his ſufferings on this melancholy, this very melancholy occaſion, will be the more ſevere.

I adviſed him to go down to the *Wood* immediately, and he conſented, as much on my account, I believe indeed, as on *his own*. I am obliged to confine *my* concern as much as poſſible to my own boſom, becauſe I am afraid of making any addition to *his*.

Of what advantage is it to be ſo lovely!—This poor girl, ſcarce eighteen, was nipped in the bud of life by ſharp affliction, undeſerved reproach, and inſupportable remorſe.

LETTER XLVI.

From the SAME to the SAME.

The Wood.

WE are now here, Mr. Myron having kindly undertaken every thing relating to the interment of our dear departed young friend. Her lovely ſmiling infant falls under my care, and is very fond of me already, though my dear Bellville can hardly bear to ſee him, without increaſing ſorrow.—"Poor boy," does he often ſay, while the tears roll down his cheeks on thoſe of little George, "ſo looked thy unhappy mother," and then turns aſide and ſmites his breaſt in all the agony of grief.

Time,

Time, I hope, and my endeavours to remove, or leſſen the anguiſh of his mind, will prove efficacious. I tremble for his health : but I am not the only perſon concerned. Griſſy Weſtley diſcovers ſo much tender anxiety, ſuch a prodigious uneaſineſs about my Bellville, that were I not ſure of his entire attachment to me, I ſhould be very much alarmed at her behaviour : yet I cannot properly take notice of it.

As to Bellville, he is too much oppreſſed with grief to obſerve any thing : but Mr. Frankly, whom I ſollicited to return with us to the *Wood*, has taken a great deal of notice of her carriage : it is really ſo uncommon that it attracts our attention. Poſſibly, the ſituation of our minds renders us the more ready to make remarks. *My* extreme love

for Bellville makes me fearful of loſing his heart; and Frankly ſeems inclined, I think, to look upon this girl with very favourable eyes. However, be my conjectures right or wrong, Griſſy has no eyes nor ears but for my Bellville. She ſits and gazes at him for hours together, and watches every turn of his countenance. If he ſighs, ſhe, like an echo, ſighs again; and if either Frankly or myſelf are happy enough to ſay any thing to draw a ſmile from him, little Griſſy's features have alſo a ſmiling appearance. With what unwearied aſſiduity does ſhe watch his every motion! with what velocity does ſhe fly to call for, and to fetch every thing that he wants!

In ſhort, I am quite perplexed—I wiſh every body ſhould approve of my choice of Bellville, but I would

would not have every woman enamoured with him.—In every other reſpect this Griſſy is a moſt amiable girl.

What can I do with her? I cannot turn her out for loving the moſt charming man in the world.

To deſert her for thinking as I do, would be to act with an unpardonable barbarity.

LETTER XLVII.

Mr. FRANKLY to Mr. MANWAYRING.

OUR dear Charles has met with ſuch an addition to his trouble, by the illneſs of his lovely Camilla, who was ſeized laſt night

with a violent fever, that I don't know what to do with him. He is the more ſeverely afflicted upon this occaſion, becauſe he firmly believes that Lady Camilla's concern about Lady Conquer, increaſed by her endeavours to conceal it from *him*, leſt it ſhould ſharpen the edge of *his* ſorrow, has brought ſo formidable a diſorder upon her.

Senſible and rational as Bellville is, in general, I will not anſwer for his life, were he to loſe Lady Camilla.

He is quite overwhelmed with melancholy; nor can all my efforts, together with Miſs Griffy's, alleviate his anxiety a ſingle moment.

I heartily wiſh that you would come down and try what effect your converſation may have upon him.

From

From what I have often heard him ſay concerning you, I ſhould imagine that you were the propereſt man in the world to make him a viſit under his preſent dejection, ſo much compaſſionated by every body here.

LETTER XLVIII.

From the SAME to the SAME.

I AM ſorry, very ſorry, that your affairs will not permit you to come to us. We are a diſtracted family.

Lady Camilla's illneſs is the ſmall-pox, to her very great ſurprize, as ſhe believed ſhe had gone through that diſorder ſome years ago.

Bell-

Bellville has not been in the leaſt concerned about the ſtriking alteration there is like to be in her perſon: "Let her but live," ſays he, "let me but preſerve her—the various charms of her mind, her elegant and entertaining converſations, will make ample amends for any diminution of her perſonal beauty."

He is certainly ſincere, for he never leaves her. He watches every turn of that nauſeous diſtemper with as much attention as if he was contemplating the fineſt features in the world, while poor Griſſy is as anxious upon Bellville's account as he is on his wife's.

This prerty girl is not aware of the miſchief ſhe is doing herſelf, by indulging a paſſion, the gratification of which muſt be, in Bellville's ſituation, criminal, were he diſpoſed to return it; but he is too much attached

tached to his Camilla to violate his conjugal vows.

I have availed myſelf of Bellville's cloſe attendance on Lady Camilla to talk more freely to Griſſy than I have ever yet done, and ſetting aſide her penchant for my friend, I have found her a ſenſible girl, with a good way of thinking, and ſuperior in point of underſtanding to the generality of her ſex of a ſimilar age.

When I firſt gently acouſed her of loving Bellville, ſhe ſtarted, as if a piſtol had been fired at her ear, and outbluſhed every thing I could compare her to; but the ſudden glow in her cheeks was immediately ſucceeded by a pale cadaverous hue—Poor girl, ſhe actually pines for a man, for whom ſhe cannot wiſh without the higheſt indelicacy; and her ſhame at my having diſcovered her imprudent pro-

propenſity almoſt threw her into a fainting fit. I ſaved her, however, by aſſuring her that I would keep her ſecret more ſecurely than ſhe had kept it herſelf, as ſhe had acted with too little caution.

"O, Mr. Frankly," ſaid the dear trembling creature, "what have I done? I am ready to die, ſo aſhamed am I of my behaviour; but I hope that neither Mr. Bellville nor Lady Camilla have obſerved ſo much as you have—What will become of me? I would leave them directly: I would fly from a place where I only diſcover continually, how very unworthy I am of their generous protection, but whither can I go?—I have no relations—no friends. To whom ſhall I apply for relief?—And yet I cannot ſtay here. What muſt they think of me?—of me, who am under

under ſuch obligations to them. The favours which they have conferred on me, have ruined me. I felt the warmeſt regard for Mr. Bellville, I thought it had been only gratitude; but I find—Oh! let me not name it, let me not think of it. I dare not look upon him now—nor upon you, Sir,—nor upon any body---"

I deſired her to compoſe herſelf, and not to give way to deſpair, as ſhe would only by ſo doing injure her health; and by weakening her rational faculties, render her leſs able to controul a paſſion which time and abſence might probably ſubdue.

"A paſſion, Sir!" cried ſhe, looking quite frighted, "indeed, Sir, I have no paſſion, it is not come to that yet; but I will hurry away, leſt, as you ſay, it ſhould prove too ſtrong for me: but whither can I go? I am very willing

ling to do any thing that's proper for a young girl to gain a ſubſiſtence, did I know to whom to offer myſelf. Oh, Sir! how terrible it is to be without friends, or any means to provide for one's ſelf, except by being under obligations never to be repaid!"

Here ſhe burſt into tears, wrung her ſoft white hands, and ſobbed aloud. Sweet girl!—how lovely are youth, beauty, and virtue, ſtriving to get the better of an imprudent inclination!

I never was ſo forcibly touched in my whole life. I was ſhocked to think I had raiſed a diſturbance in a mind quite free, I dare ſwear, from any evil intentions—but I had been acting a friendly part, to let her ſee her danger, of which ſhe ſeemed not to be in the leaſt ſenſible, till I pointed it out to her.

I ſtrove, therefore, by every gentle ſoothing art to aſſuage, to quiet the ſtorm, which I had ſtirred up, by aſſuring her that I was, that I would be her ſincere friend; that I would protect her, and put her in a way to accept of my beſt ſervices, without laying her under the ſlighteſt obligations of which ſhe appeared to be ſo much afraid.

"Aye—how?" cried ſhe, earneſtly fixing her pretty weeping eyes on me.

"By transferring all the tenderneſs you feel for my friend Charles to me: by giving yourſelf to me for ever: by ——"

"O ſtay, Sir," replied ſhe, interrupting me, and bluſhing exceſſively, "that will not do."

"Not immediately, perhaps, my dear girl," ſaid I, "but don't you think

think it poſſible for me, by the fondeſt and ſincereſt endeavours to pleaſe you, to gain your heart from him, tho' his perſon——"

"It is not his perſon," cried ſhe; "why *you* are very handſome—but," continued ſhe, ſighing, "you are not Bellville."

She ſpoke theſe laſt words in ſo bewitching a manner, that I caught her, bluſhing, to my boſom, and kiſſed her.

She begged me to let her go, with a confuſion in her countenance which heightened her beauty.

"Never," ſaid I, "except you promiſe to think leſs of my friend, and more of me. My advice is that you remain here till Lady Camilla is recovered; and then, after having married you, in the preſence of theſe good friends, I will take you away, and

and never bring you again into Bellville's ſight, till you are cured of your fooliſh prepoſſeſſion: it may be juſtly called a fooliſh one, which muſt be prejudicial to you in every ſhape."

She fetched a deep ſigh, and lifted up her lovely hands and eyes but made no *verbal* reply.

She is really a moſt charming girl, and if I can but hinder her from giving way to a paſſion, which, could it be indulged, (and I know it cannot, from Bellville's honour and his unalterable attachment to Lady Camilla, on whom he doats as much now, diſfigured as ſhe is by the moſt loathſome of all diſtempers, as much as he did when ſhe firſt came to his arms as beautiful as an angel) muſt be attended with infamy and ruin.

I think I deſerve her for my pains. My conſtant buſineſs muſt be, during Bell-

Bellville's temporary abſence, while he is waiting on his Camilla, to fortify her mind againſt him, and to inſpire her with tender ſenſations for me.

Is not this a laudable, but is it not alſo an arduous undertaking? In love, however, as in war, the pleaſure ariſing from the conqueſt, is doubled by our reflecting on the difficulties which we have ſurmounted in the acquiſition of it.

LETTER XLIX.

Mrs. Burton to Lady Camilla Bellville.

YOUR ſilence ſurprizes and alarms me, my dear friend.—No new affliction, I hope, has pre-

prevented you from writing to me.

You have undoubtedly heard that poor Moyle is dead, but poſſibly are not acquainted with the manner of his deceaſe.

He could not bear the thoughts of having been acceſſary to the death of Lady Conquer—I have received ſome particulars of his behaviour, after the fatal event, which occaſioned him to leave England, from Lord Stanfield, who arrived here a few days ago, to take a ſurvey of an eſtate which he was about purchaſing when he was laſt in Ireland. I will tranſmit them to you, as they will ſerve to ſhew to what lengths the improper indulgenee of an indiſcreet paſſion will carry people, and how very carefully thoſe who are ſeized with ſuch a paſſion ought to conduct themſelves.

Lord Stanfield conſtantly correſponded with Moyle after his arrival in France.—The following account I received from his own mouth.

On ſending him the news of Lady Conquer's death, though I ſoftened it as much as poſſible, I received an anſwer wrote in a ſtyle of ſuch deep deſpair, that it made me extremely uneaſy, and I reſolved to join him at Paris, to which place I had before preſſingly urged him to repair, hoping that the amuſements he might there meet with would diſpel his melancholy ideas, and ſubſtitute others of a different kind in their ſtead. Accordingly I ſet out with Lady Stanfield.

We found Moyle much worſe than we expected to ſee him, both as to health and ſpirits. He was almoſt a ſkeleton, and never diſcovered the leaſt ſign of chearfulneſs or ſatisfaction

tion at any thing. A faint ſmile only juſt gleamed on his pallid cheeks at the ſight of me, which ſmile rather gave him a ghaſtly appearance, and made him look a ſtill more emaciated object.

As I always had a ſincere affection for him, I was, I poſitively declare, quite ſhocked, but inſiſted upon his having a commodious apartment in the ſame *hotel* in which I lodged, that my Biddy might ſet herſelf about nurſing him, and that we might order all kinds of reſtoratives procurable to be prepared for him.

For a long time he refuſed to liſten to any advice, and to take any ſort of medicine, ſaying that he had murdered the moſt lovely, the moſt innocent of women, and that he could not ſuffer too much, as it was out of his power, to make her any the leaſt reparation.

Frequently would he exclaim in theſe terms, "When I think of the miſery which ſhe endured on *my* account, when fancy pictures her all pale, trembling, dying, as I beheld her for the laſt—laſt time, no torments upon earth are equal to thoſe I feel at this inſtant,—Poor unhappy, undone Lucy! Could but the excruciating pangs which tear my heart into a thouſand pieces recall thee to life, and make thee ſenſible of my remorſe for what is paſt, I would willingly ſuffer more racking ones, if ſuch can poſſibly be ſuſtained by mortality."

In this manner he always replied to our intreaties to make uſe of remedies for his preſervation; ſo that I really thought it better to ceaſe teazing him, as our importunities ſerved only to revive diſagreeable ſcenes, and

and to renew the griefs which thoſe ſcenes occaſioned.

We therefore only threw all kinds of nouriſhing things in his way, that he might, on finding himſelf faint and low, be tempted to take ſome of them.

To our great concern they remained untouched, and he viſibly grew worſe and worſe.

At laſt ſeeing him but barely ſtrong enough to walk acroſs the room, I very earneſtly and warmly expoſtulated with him, aſking him if he was not committing a criminal action, by deſtroying himſelf through neglect: if he thought that he was doing any honour to Lady Conquer's memory by ſuch a procedure, or that ſhe would be more pleaſed with him (ſuppoſing her to be ſenſible of his ſituation) for taking pains to put an end

to his exiſtence, than for liſtening to reaſon, and endeavouring to recover his health and ſpirits.

He replied—"Oh! that I could be but certain that ſhe ſaw me in the midſt of my anguiſh, that ſhe heard the language of my tortured ſoul, tortured by the deepeſt remorſe, for having deſtroyed, in the very bloom of youth and beauty, ſuch an angelic creature!——But 'tis paſt—it cannot—cannot be recalled. I have pierced the deareſt, the moſt virtuous boſom——'Twas I—'twas I, who killed her, and I will die to make ſome expiation for a crime of ſo black a complexion. But death is not a puniſhment ſufficiently ſevere---'Tis indeed a happineſs, as I can taſte no felicity upon earth without her."

He ſaid but little after this, and even ſhunned his ſiſter and myſelf as

as much as poſſible: we, however, left nothing undone which we thought capable of making a change in his diſordered mind: diſordered it certainly was, for the next morning he was found dead in his bed.

You may imagine what a ſhock, and how much concern I felt; and I was not leſs ſhocked, leſs concerned, by reading the following note, which lay directed to me upon his table.

" I cannot quit the world, my " dear friend and brother, without " bidding you an eternal farewel, " nor without acknowledging the " kind endeavours which you and " my amiable ſiſter have uſed to re- " ſtore me to my former ſelf.---But " it would not be---all that remain- " ed of me was dedicated to my loſt

" to her I ardently pray I may be go-
" ing. May you and your wife en-
" joy all happineſs; mine has been
" long centered in the dear long-
" loved, and ever-lamented, Lucy,
" who deſerved a better fate than
" that brought upon her, by

" Your wretched

" Brother,

" E. MOYLE."

I ſhuddered at the peruſal of this note, which ſeemed to reproach me ſeverely for not having ſuſpected the derangements of his intellects early enough to take precautions to hinder the execution of a deſign for which I was totally unprepared: nor can I yet

yet tell by what means he releaſed himſelf from the load of miſery which oppreſſed him, as no marks of violence appeared upon his perſon; and I am ſometimes inclined to think that nature overcharged ſaved him from the guilt of ſuicide. However, I firmly believe that had he lived, he would always have been a wretched burthen to himſelf, and an object pitiable in the higheſt degree to his friends. While I watered his remains with the tears of fraternal ſorrow, I ſupplicated that Almighty Being who had mercifully ſnatched me from perdition, when I was, poſſibly, on the brink of a precipice equally deſtructive, to pardon an unhappy creature, whoſe paſſions had been too ſtrong to be controuled by the curb of reaſon.

Lord Stanfield could proceed no farther. The different ſenſations which he felt, occaſioned by his unfeigned grief for his brother, and by his ſincere gratitude for his own preſervation, agitated him ſo much, that words in vain laboured for a paſſage.

His amiable wife (ſhe is indeed really ſo) perceiving the conflict in his ſtrongly feeling breaſt, ran to his aſſiſtance, ſeized his hand, and preſſed it to her lips. "My dear, dear lord," ſaid ſhe, "be comforted."

"My Biddy, my angel," replied he, ſnatching her to his boſom, "preſerver of my honour, and dear to me as my life, thou haſt ſaved me from the ſharp ſtings of remorſe: thou art indeed my only comfort. From poor Moyle's unfortunate exit let no man dare attempt a woman of virtue.

virtue. I, but for thee, my deareſt, might have fallen, deſpiſed and unlamented by all thoſe who deſerve to be reſpected by the innocence of their lives. The humane, however, will reflect with compaſſion on Edward's fate, who, had he oppoſed his paſſions before they became too unruly to be governable, might have been the worthieſt and the moſt exemplary of men."

Here my lord concluded his melancholy narrative, and has, I think, by his own conduct, proved the poſſibility of a man's being capable of reforming, after having been thoroughly convinced of his errors.

I now hope you will own that I was not quite miſtaken in my man, when I told you I believed that his lordſhip had it in his power to make the woman whom he really loved happy. I would not, however, have

you infer from hence that I look upon a marriage with a man who is not ſteady in thoſe principles, which can alone tend to make the conjugal ſtate happy, as an eligible ſtep. With regard to Lord Stanfield, I am very well aſſured that the propriety of his behaviour to my lady makes her riſe ſuperior to our expectations, as ſhe confeſſes that ſhe feels herſelf powerfully impelled to equal, if not excel, thoſe ladies of birth and fortune whom he left for her, who had no ſuch flattering advantages, and who was in many reſpects unworthy of him, and by the moſt affectionate gratitude, to deſerve the tenderneſs which he hourly diſcovers for her. Indeed, I cannot find that (the indiſcreet elopement from her father excepted) ſhe has ever been guilty of a ſingle miſdemeanour; and her preſent happineſs moſt probably

ariſes from her ſincere contrition for that imprudent proceeding—A ſtriking example to young people who have taken through inadvertence a falſe ſtep in life; an encouragement to them alſo to retrieve it as ſoon as they are conſcious of its impropriety!

LETTER L.

Lady CAMILLA BELLVILLE to Mrs. BURTON.

AFTER a tedious confinement and a total change of my perſon, I am, at laſt, permitted to take up my pen.

The

The ſmall-pox, my dear Burton, has ſo altered your friend, that you would not know her. What ſighs hath it not coſt me! what regret have I not felt at reſigning a face, which was once, I may now ſafely ſay, handſome! Not on my own account, however, do I, can I lament the loſs of a *perſon*, once ſo flattered and admired; but on my Bellville's, who deſerves the moſt beautiful and the beſt woman in the world. It is impoſſible for me to paint his anxiety or his tenderneſs in their true colours: I deſpair of doing them juſtice, and therefore will give over the attempt. Yet, what will you ſay to me when I tell you that he ſwears he loves me more than ever? and what will you ſay to me, after all my fuſſes and frights, when I tell you that I believe him? Will you not lay down my letter and laugh

laugh heartily at us both?—And yet, Burton, there is nothing more certain—But to write leſs enigmatically—

As ſoon as I found out what was the matter with me, I ſpent the firſt part of my illneſs in ravings and lamentations about my *perſon*, which I cannot deſcribe: not that I cared a ſtraw whether I was handſome or ugly, if I could but have any hopes of preſerving Bellville's heart in a ſtate of uglineſs, to which I was undoubtedly doomed; but not daring to encourage ſuch hopes, I attributed his anxiety and ſolicitude about me, entirely to his humane diſpoſition; and this belief had ſo fatal an effect upon me, that it ſtruck my diſorder in, and I was thought to be dying. The apprehenſions of death, however, dreadful as they are to moſt people, gave me,

me, I assure you, no uneasiness. I expected the last moment as a moment of felicity; for the loss of life was preferable, in *my* opinion, to the loss of Bellville's affection. I therefore gave up every thing; and every creature but my dearest Charles, whose affliction is not to be expressed, gave up *me*. He never left me, sat night and day by my side, while I lay almost insensible of every thing but his regard; which, when he believed I was no longer in a condition to attend to it, broke out in the most forcible manner—Never was sorrow more poignant than *his*.—Shall I confess, my dear friend, that I felt a satisfaction at being so movingly lamented. I pitied him from the bottom of my heart.—But imagine what were my emotions, when, in the midst of a consultation held by the phy-

phyſicians who attended me, at which Bellville and Miſs Weſtly happened to be preſent, they declared that there was no poſſibility of ſaving me but by ſome perſon who had never had the diſtemper going into bed to me and drawing the venom out of me.

Bellville, my tender generous Bellville, inſtantly began to pull off his cloaths in a hurry, quite regardleſs of the people in the room.

"I may yet ſave her then," cried he.

"Hold, Sir," at once exclaimed both doctors, "have you never had the ſmall-pox? And would you venture to attend your lady?"

"Venture!" replied he, ſtill undreſſing, "what would I *not* venture to ſave all that's dear to me in life."

Ter-

Terrified at his reſolution, and unable any longer to contain myſelf, I raiſed my head, feeble as I was, to inſiſt upon his leaving me immediately.

Griſſy Weſtly then, throwing herſelf on her knees before him, caught hold of his waiſtcoat, for he had thrown off his coat.

"For the love of heaven, Sir, ſtay:" ſaid ſhe, "Oh! ſtop, and do not murder yourſelf, and your dear lady Camilla too, for I am ſure ſhe will not ſurvive you."

Then turning to the phyſician, "Oh! do not ſuffer him," continued ſhe, "to ſtay a moment longer here —he will be killed: indeed, indeed he will—"

Tears prevented any farther utterance.

Bell-

Bellville, deaf to her exclamations, threw himſelf from her, and was ſtepping towards the bed.

Griſſy at that inſtant fell on the floor—The ſight of her in that ſituation made one of the doctors call for help, while the other perſuaded Bellville to deſiſt from trying ſo deſperate a remedy for my preſervation. —But to no purpoſe—nor could the weak reſiſtance which I made in puſhing him from me, ſcreaming at the ſame time as loud as I could, avail.

Inſtantly ſtepping round to the other ſide of the bed, he threw off his waiſtcoat, while they were employed in recovering Griſſy, who had fainted, and claſping me to his boſom, begged me to be compoſed, "We ſhall both do very well," ſaid he.

I can-

I cannot tell you, my dear, what my mind endured; but I ſoon felt a kindly warmth diffuſed all over me, the malignity of my diſtemper was thrown out, and from that hour I mended: notwithſtanding my terror for my Bellville, the tranſporting reflections on his uncommon tenderneſs in hazarding his life for me, ſaved me.

I cannot, however, enter into a minute detail of the different ſtages of my diſorder: I have not leiſure to ſend you ſuch particulars. My Charles caught it, but had it very favourably. He never quitted my chamber, having ordered a bed to be laid on the ground by the ſide of mine.

While we were in this diſagreeable ſtate, poor Griffy, who had been ſo much terrified on my Bellville's account,

count, was ſeized with a fever, from which ſhe is ſcarce recovered.

When Bellville and I began to grow better, I enquired after Griſſy.

He told me that as ſoon as ſhe was well enough to go abroad it would be better, he thought, to ſend her to another part of the country for change of air, as the doctor imagined her caſe to be a conſumptive one.

I looked at him while he ſpoke, and fancied that he had, as well as Mr. Frankly, diſcovered her love for him, and availed himſelf of this handſome pretence to remove her.

How my heart adored him for his conſideration! I could no longer confine my gratitude within my own boſom—I burſt into tears of tranſport—

"How I doat on you, my dear excellent Bellville," ſaid I, "would

to

to heaven—(hiding my wretched disfigured face with my hand) would to heaven I was as handsome, for your sake, as Griffy."

"I should not like you half so well if you were," replied he, snatching away my hand from my eyes, (luckily my hands and neck are not spoilt.) "No, my dear Camilla, you are, believe me, more lovely to *me*, than the most beautiful woman in the universe. You are a thousand times dearer to me than ever; and as to the loss of your complexion, concerning which you have suffered so much anxiety, for want of knowing the true situation of my heart, let it not give you the smallest disquietude. What are the finest features and the most blooming complexion when set in competition with those many virtues and amiable qualities of which you

are

are poſſeſſed: no, Camilla, while you have ſo many ſubſtantial charms, you will have no reaſon to regret the loſs of a few ſhadowy attractions; and you cannot, without having the meaneſt opinion of me, ſuppoſe that I married you merely for your external beauties. As to Griſſy's removal, I only mentioned it becauſe I am well aſſured that Frankly loves her, and becauſe I think that a different air may be ſerviceable to her."

How tender! how unaffected! how very lovely is he! There is no vanity—no levity in him! Univerſal benevolence is the only paſſion he feels.

Poor, ſcared, fond creature as I am, I could only expreſs my ſenſe of his affectionate carriage by graſping his hand, while he ſtrained me with ardour to his heart.

Frankly

Frankly came in at that moment to aſk our permiſſion to make Griſſy *his* for ever.

"I have, but with the greateſt difficulty, procured her conſent to be united to me," ſaid he, "and as ſoon as we are married I will take her into B——ſhire, where I hope new ſcenes and another air will be of ſervice to her."

My dear Charles's countenance brightened up in a particular manner at this determination. "Take her, my friend," cried he, "ſhe is, I believe, a very good girl, and may you be ever as happy together as my Camilla and I am."

Griſſy ſoon afterwards made her appearance with downcaſt eyes and a heaving boſom.

She ſuffered herſelf, tho' reluctantly, to be led to us by Frankly.

Bell-

Bellville then ſaid, "Miſs Weſtly, give me leave, as your ſincere friend, to put you for ever under the protection of this gentleman, who, I am ſure, loves you, and deſerves you; and let me prevail on you no longer to poſtone a ceremony which will place you more immediately under his tender care."

Poor Griſſy ſighed, and only replied with a low curteſy to Bellville, while ſhe gave her hand to Frankly, burſting into tears.

I felt for her: we all, I thought, except my excellent Charles, made very aukward figures.

Frankly was undoubtedly of *my* mind, for he hurried the weeping girl out of the room, and I ſhall haſten to conclude this long letter.

I ſhewed your affecting account of Moyle's death to my Bellville, but re-

repented afterwards; for it renewed all his affliction for poor Lady Conquer.

He threw the letter down, crying, "ill-fated girl!" Then turning to me, and taking me in his arms, he added, "Yet how dare I repine, when heaven has ſpared my Camilla!"

LET-

LETTER LI.

Mr. BELLVILLE to Mr. MANWAYRING.

I AM now, my Manwayring, happier than I have been for many months. My beloved wife has perfectly recovered her health; and ſince ſhe ſees no alteration in my behaviour to her, rather a more affectionate attention in it, ſhe begins, I hope, to be better reconciled to the demolition of her beauty —Yet I ſtill frequently catch her hiding her face with her ſnowy hands, while the former makes the latter appear a thouſand times more alluring.

I do not, Manwayring, indeed I do not deceive her, when I tell her that

ſhe is dearer to me than ever. The increaſing tenderneſs which ſhe hourly diſcovers for me, and her grateful ſenſations, as ſhe will call them, for my having endangered *my* life to preſerve *hers*, added to the extreme pain and anxiety which ſhe certainly endured when her dear languid eyes could only look up to heaven for help, have excited feelings in me which I am unable to deſcribe. My mind alſo has been more at eaſe ſince the marriage and departure of Miſs Weſtly. She was married a few days ago—you are no ſtranger to what has paſſed in my family relating to her: but I ſolemnly declare that I never gave her the leaſt reaſon to believe that I had other ſentiments for her, but what compaſſion for her ſituation, which was, I thought, particularly unfortunate, on account of her youth

and

and beauty, inſpired. She had not touched my heart *before* I became acquainted with Lady Camilla, and *afterwards* it was impoſſible for me to think of any other woman.

Frankly has behaved handſomely, and will, I doubt not, be ſoon maſter of Griſſy's heart.

I did not preſs you to come among us while our houſe was ſo like an infirmary; but now, my friend, health, peace, and love, once more unite to make our manſion the manſion of happineſs.

Poor little George, and my lovely ſmiling girl, have fortunately recovered from the ſmall-pox without being marked. Haſten, therefore, my dear friend, to increaſe our felicity by your company. It will be neceſſary for me to enliven my home as much as poſſible, ſince my Camilla tells me

that ſhe ſhall be aſhamed to ſhew her face with me in the world. I do not, however, deſpair of bringing her again into publick, as often at leaſt as I deſire her to make a publick appearance; and I ſhall only requeſt her to conſent to ſuch an appearance now and then to ſhift the ſcene a little. While *I* am poſſeſt of her heart, I care not who likes or diſlikes her face. This I am ſure of, as I was not captivated by her perſon alone, I can ſee no diſagreeable change in her: ſhe has the ſame ſtrong underſtanding, and the ſame elegant intellectual attainments; ſhe has the ſame melodious voice and converſible powers; and is, in ſhort, bewitching in ſo many various ſhapes, that ſhe can never be leſs beloved than ſhe is by her delighted doating

CHARLES BELLVILLE.

LET-

LETTER LII.

Mr. FRANKLY to Mr. BELLVILLE.

AFTER a trial of above three months, I think I may venture to pronounce, from the obliging behaviour of my wife, that ſhe is perfectly reconciled to me and to her lot. It was indeed great preſumption in me to expect to gain a heart which you, my friend, was maſter of: yet from your own repeated aſſeverations that you never made the leaſt attempt to pleaſe her, which were confirmed by your cool and diſtant behaviour to her, I was encouraged to try to undermine you. Unrequited love is frequently ſoon extinguiſhed for want of fuel to

keep up the flame; and I flatter myſelf that my unabated attentions to give her pleaſure, added to her own diſpoſition, which ſeems to be uncommonly gentle and complying, together with time, will, I hope, make a conſiderable change in my favour. I will not, however, bring her yet to the *Wood*, nor to your neighbourhood; though Mr. Myron and Miſs Greaves, with whom you know Griſſy contracted a great intimacy while ſhe was under Lady Camilla's protection, have given us many and many earneſt invitations. I will ſtay a whole year before I venture ſo near the *Wood*. I often wiſh myſelf among you: but the man who cannot be contented with ſuch a beautiful young creature as Griſſy, muſt be very difficult indeed. You have more than once aſſured me that

that Lady Camilla's perſonal charms were the ſlighteſt inducements to make you think of marrying her: I cannot help ſurmizing, nevertheleſs, my friend, that you muſt be pleaſed to find her improve every day upon you, as Miſs Greaves, who correſponds with Griſſy, informs her, that the traces of her ladyſhip's late diſorder grew fainter and fainter, though they may be never eradicated. Happy are you in poſſeſſing all her tenderneſs, of which nothing can deprive you. Every man muſt not expect to be as fortunate as Bellville.

LETTER LIII.

Lady CAMILLA BELLVILLE to Mrs. BURTON.

AFTER the obliging viſit you made us in England, and after you had been witneſs to our conjugal felicity, muſt I ſtill have new diſturbances to relate, not on my own account, but on my dear Charles's? I cannot be indifferent to any thing in which *he* is concerned in the ſmalleſt ſhape. How can I poſſibly be loved, ſo adored as I am, as I ſtill am, notwithſtandiug the great alteration in my *perſon*, be unaffected with any thing relating to him? No man, I think, ſo ſituated, could have gone thro' the trials which he has encoun-

tered,

tered, without deviating, like him, from the paths of rectitude and honour in the ſlighteſt degree.

You ſaw Frankly and his Griſſy when you were with us: ſaw her make her firſt appearance after her marriage, near my amiable, and conſequently dangerous Bellville; and you may remember that you owned yourſelf pleaſed with the agreeable modeſty of her behaviour, and the very proper and reſpectful reſerve in her carriage to my Charles. Yet Frankly was not ſatisfied with her; he muſt have her behave exactly to him as I do to Bellville—She cannot poſſibly ſo behave, except ſhe loves him in the ſame manner; and I fear that will never be the caſe.

I always maintained, you know, from my own firſt unhappy marriage, that the inconſtancy of the men ge-

nerally is the foundation of *our* indiſcretions. Poor Lady Conquer felt the truth of this aſſertion; and Griſſy has but too much reaſon to acknowledge the juſtneſs of it. I little thought, indeed, that Frankly, who was ſo diſtractedly fond of Miſs Weſtly as to marry her, when he knew he was not the man of her choice, would be ſo ſoon weary of her.—But he lays the blame on *her*, and ſhe imprudently enough has complained to Bellville.

You muſt hear the beginning of this difference between them.

While Mrs. Frankly was Miſs Weſtly, the frequent interviews between us and Mr. Myron's family occaſioned an intimacy betwen Griſſy and Bell Greaves; and the latter had ſomehow or other the addreſs to get the ſecret out of the former relating to her

her prodigious regard for Bellville, which was rather conſpicuous to every body.

When Frankly brought his wife, after above a year's abſence to viſit us, (ſuppoſing her quite cured of her inclination) Miſs Greaves and ſhe renewed their acquaintance.

Frankly, who was, you obſerved, vaſtly lively, and who, though he is not fooliſh, behaved more like a ſchool-boy than a married man, took it in his head to chat and romp with Bell, and *ſhe* not being accuſtomed to receive ſuch attentions from ſo young and handſome a fellow, (if indeed from any being of the maſculine gender,) very much encouraged them: nay, my Bellville ſays, and inſiſts upon it, that ſhe made the firſt advances; declaring that ſhe behaved in the ſame man-

ner preciſely to *him*, (but that he was determined not to ſee her overtures) and never would let him alone till ſhe found he was reſolved to take no notice of her.

Frankly perſiſted fooliſhly in toying with her till their behaviour became very particular; they even ſometimes romped out of ſight, and remained together a great while by themſelves.

Mrs. Frankly ſeemed to pay no attention to their indiſcreet conduct. One day when we were all in Mr. Myron's garden, I happened to be walking with him, while Bellville, Mr. and Mrs. Frankly, and Bell Greaves were together a little behind us.

Frankly playing with a favourite greyhound at my uncle's, on a ſudden catched Bell's white handkerchief,

part

part of which hung out of her pocket, and ſtrove to fling it over the dog's head; upon which ſhe attempted to ſnatch it from him, proteſting with a laugh, that it would be torn, and that he ſhould give it her.

He ſwore that he would keep it for a collar for *Caro*.

This kind of foolery continued till the dog breaking from him, he purſued *Caro*, and ſhe *him*, leaving Mrs. Frankly with Bellville in the walk.

It ſo happened that Mr. Myron and I turned down the next walk, which was only parted by a filbert hedge from that in which *they* were.

Juſt as we entered it a ſervant came to tell him that a gentleman who was juſt arrived wiſhed to ſpeak with him.

He

He quitted me with a promiſe to return, and as ſoon as he was gone I thought I heard Mrs. Frankly's voice ſound very plaintively.

Looking through an opening in the hedge, I ſaw her tottering towards a ſeat, and my Charles ſupporting her, at the ſame time looking round as if he wiſhed to ſee ſomebody who could aſſiſt him in taking care of her.

She ſat down very near the ſpot on which I ſtood, and fetching a deep ſigh, ſaid ſhe was the moſt unhappy of women.

"I am extremely ſorry to hear you ſay ſo," replied Bellville, "when you have every thing in your own power to make you otherwiſe, married from pure diſintereſted affection to a young, handſome, good-natured man, poſſeſt of an affluent fortune, and

and ready to gratify every wiſh of your heart."

"He has been willing to indulge me," ſaid ſhe, "but for a ſhort time only, while there was no other woman in his way: you muſt ſee a great difference in him *now*, I believe."

"Why ſure," ſaid Bellville, "you are not weak enough to be jealous of Bell Greaves!"

"Indeed I can't tell," anſwered ſhe, "but he prefers every body to *me*."

"You wrong him, you wrong yourſelf, Mrs. Frankly," ſaid he, "by this unkind, this injurious ſuggeſtion. Muſt not a man laugh, chat, or trifle, merely for a little mirth, with any other woman, without your immediately imagining that he prefers her to *you*? I am perſuaded that Frankly loves no woman, never

did

did love any woman except yourſelf; but he is naturally lively, and the vivacity of his diſpoſition may poſſibly incline him to amuſe himſelf innocently with every thing that comes in his way."

"He is *your* friend, Sir," anſwered ſhe, "and you ſee no faults in him: but I am ſure you would not behave ſo yourſelf."

"I am, poſſibly, of a more ſerious turn," ſaid he, "but there are none of us without our little foibles; and had you been married to *me* you might have found out as many weakneſſes in me by this time."

O Heavens!" cried ſhe, "what a croud of torturing ideas have you raiſed in my mind!—No, Mr. Bellville, I was never deſtined to be ſo bleſt.—Yet—though I ſee by the diſdainful frown that's gathering on your

your brow for which, though it ſtrikes me to the heart, I honour you, that you have the meaneſt opinion of me—Yet I do not deſerve it, Sir: (burſting into tears) had heaven permitted me to paſs my days with the man whom I muſt ever revere, I had been but too happy. I was deſtined to a far leſs deſirable ſituation; but I ſtrove, to the utmoſt of my power, to repay the affection which I received, by the ſincereſt gratitude. When I ſee, however, that a woman, much older than myſelf, with very few attractions (if I may give credit to my eyes and ears) is able to draw the man from me whom I have taken ſo much pains to love, when I ſee too, the reſpect, the tenderneſs, the almoſt adoration with which *you* have ever behaved to Lady Camilla—ſee you even now be-

behave to her in the ſame manner as if ſhe had ſuffered no alteration in her *perſon*—Oh! Mr. Bellville, how can you expect me to have patience?"

Was not this a pretty extraordinary addreſs, Burton, and from ſuch a girl too?

But only hear my glorious Bellville's anſwer.

"Lady Camilla and I, madam," replied he, with an unuſual dignity in his voice and manner, "are quite out of the queſtion in every thing relating to Mr. Frankly and you. *My* wife is ſo eminently ſuperior to moſt women, is ſo *unalterably* lovely, and poſſeſſed of ſuch an uncommon ſhare of diſcretion, that ſhe almoſt confers merit by her diſtinguiſhing approbation; and if I did not endeavour to be the faithfulleſt, the tendereſt, and

and the moſt affectionate huſband, I ſhould be very unworhty of ſo valuable a wife. Look up, therefore, to Lady Camilla, Mrs Frankly, as a pattern of conjugal excellence; and believe me, you will find my friend every thing you can wiſh him to be."

Having uttered thoſe words he walked away, and left poor Griſſy overwhelmed with confuſion and vexation.

Only think, my Louiſa, how my heart glowed when I heard my Charles talk in ſuch terms about me: terms which the looks of the perſon to whom they were addreſſed warranted to be ſincere.

I ſtood immoveable with rapture. He then turned acoidentally into the walk I was in, and flew towards me. I caught him in my arms, but could

could not articulate a ſingle ſyllable.

"What means this new ſweet tranſport, my Camilla," ſaid he, looking upon me with eyes overflowing with affection.

"When I tell you that I have overheard every word you juſt now ſaid to Mrs. Frankly," replied I, recovering, "you will not wonder at my increaſing tenderneſs."

"Have you, my love?" ſaid he ſmiling, with an impaſſioned air; "I did not imagine you was ſo near; but I would always wiſh to have my dear Camilla approve every inmoſt thought of my heart, which has ever throbbed, and will for ever throb for *her* alone.

The return of Mr. Myron prevented any anſwer with words; but I looked one, and then aſked my uncle

uncle if he did not think us a couple of ſtrange people, to be ſo ridiculouſly attached to each other after having been ſo long married?

"Faith!" replied the good old man, "I ſhould be glad to ſee all my married friends to the full as ridiculous with all my heart."

This ſpeech naturally brought on a converſation relating to Frankly, to whom my amiable Bellville promiſed to talk upon this ſubject.

Surely my Charles has been ſufficiently tried; but nothing can corrupt ſuch a mind as *his*.

In continuation.

Bellville, without giving Frankly the ſlighteſt reaſon to ſuppoſe that Mrs. Frankly retains the leaſt par-

particular eſteem for *him*, has made him ſenſible that his idle fooleries with Bell Greaves were very abſurd, and might be productive of very diſagreeable conſequences. Nay, indeed he managed the affair with ſo much addreſs, that Frankly believes actually his wife is monſtrouſly jealous of him, and that her jealouſy ariſes from her juſt beginning to feel a paſſion for *him* ſhe never was ſenſible of before.

He confeſſes that he was wrong to fall into the ſnare Bell had laid for him; and declares that ſhe is an envious, wanton, ugly devil, whom he never ſhould have thought of had ſhe not began firſt by throwing herſelf in his way, which free proceeding, added to his Griſſy's coyneſs, he ſays, made him ready to play the fool with any body.—"I am now," continued he,

he, "obliged to my friend for his information and advice, and will take Griſſy home again, hoping to find a great change in her for the better."

Poor Griſſy took leave of us with a heavy heart and weeping eyes, and was utterly unable to ſpeak a word.

My amiable Charles bade her adieu with a cool indifference, which I believe deeply touched her.

She bluſhed extremely, I thought, at the recollection of what had paſſed between them. When ſhe ſees him no longer, and finds her huſband's tenderneſs return, ſhe will, I hope, become alſo more reaſonable.

While Frankly kept to *her* alone ſhe was contented. It is almoſt always in the power of the oppoſite ſex, my dear friend, to make us good,

and

and to preſerve us ſo: but naturally weak and imperfect as we are, it is no wonder we ſtray from the paths of diſcretion, when thoſe who ought to ſet us good examples, and to lure us from vice and folly, lead us to infamy and ruin, by giving an unbounded looſe to their lawleſs appetites.

Let every woman, therefore, who would be happy in the marriage-ſtate, never truſt her perſon, nor what is of more conſequence to her honour and her peace, her morals, to the man of a licentious and inconſtant diſpoſition; for though ſhe may be able to reſiſt temptation, a virtuous woman never can be happy with ſuch a man; ſhe muſt, by having a good heart herſelf, and more eſpecially if ſhe loves him, feel the deepeſt regret at his want of right principles,

which

which can only make him happy here and hereafter.

LETTER LIV.

From the SAME to the SAME.

AS you expreſſed in your anſwer to my laſt, ſo many doubts about poor Griſſy's ever being perfectly happy, or of making her huſband ſo, I have the ſatisfaction to aſſure you that Frankly tells my Charles in a letter (the principal paragraphs of which he permits me to copy for your peruſal) they are, at laſt, in a fair way to follow us cloſe in their domeſtic felicity: ac-

knowledging, at the ſame time, that my dear Belville has been the entire cauſe of it: *the* Bellville who once, he imagined, was the cauſe of his Griſſy's indifference to him.

It will be neceſſary, however, to tell you previouſly, that ever ſince they left the Wood the laſt time, my Charles wrote long letters frequently to his friend, which were filled with the moſt earneſt perſuaſions, to treat a poor young creature with the greateſt conſideration, who had, he was certain, a well diſpoſed heart, and who might very eaſily be brought to doat on him merely for his tenderneſs, as ſhe had always declared that gratitude alone firſt prompted her to prefer the man who had appeared to her to be her beſt friend, to any other perſon.

Frankly, in his laſt anſwer, ſaid, that

that he had followed his advices in every reſpect, and had ſtrove by every method in his power to divert her melancholy, by carrying her to all the diverſions round about the country.

Take his own words.

" I made frequent parties among the neighbouring families for amuſement, but found that ſhe entered into them only out of complaiſance. The moſt elegant entertainments, the moſt ſprightly converſations, had no effect upon her, nor did they in the leaſt tend to remove her dejection. The more chearful *I* appeared amongſt my friends, the more ſerious ſhe grew."

I determined, therefore, to change my behaviour, and to try if I could, by falling in with her own humour, ſucceed better.

In conſequence of this determina-

tion, I ſhut myſelf up with her, and entirely accommodated myſelf in every ſhape to her taſte; refuſed to aſſociate any longer with thoſe who had apparently given her no pleaſure, and ſpent my hours in ſometimes reading to her, and ſometimes walking with her in the garden, in which ſhe ſeems to find the greateſt ſatisfaction, as ſhe is the prettieſt little floweriſt imaginable: and in order to gain her favour, often aſſiſted her in ranging her flower pots, in making up noſegays, and diſpoſing them in a manner the moſt agreeable to her fancy, which was indeed very elegant.

As ſhe always appeared to be contented while I thus employed myſelf about her, I reſolved to purſue your friendly inſtructions to the utmoſt; and began to propoſe new hints for her

her to improve upon. I aſſiſted her in forming a ſhrubbery at a little diſtance from the houſe. When it was almoſt completed under our joint directions, I purchaſed, unknown to her, a great number of birds, many of them remarkable for their beautiful plumage, others for the melody of their tones, and ſome for being ſo tame that they would eat out of any perſon's hand, who treated them with gentleneſs. This little feathered choir, being ready to be properly diſpoſed among the ſhrubs and flowers for their own convenience, and to make the greateſt variety, I took her out for that day to a ſpot ſome miles diſtant from us, to ſhew her a particularly fine proſpect, which we had not yet ſeen.

As ſhe and I were by ourſelves, ſhe ſeemed more pleaſed than ſhe

had been for ſome time. We breakfaſted and dined, and drank tea at a neat farm to which I had previouſly ordered all kinds of refreſhments to be conveyed on the preceding day.

The weather favoured my ſcheme. There was ſcarce a cloud in the hemiſphere. My Griſſy never looked half ſo lively, half ſo inviting: ſhe inſpired me with an unuſual flow of tenderneſs, which I however feared too rapturouſly to indulge, leſt by ſo doing I ſhould take off her attention from the agreeable ſcene with which I wiſhed her to be delighted, and make her think me rather impertinently teazing. But ſtill my increaſing paſſion, my longings to give a looſe to it, and my endeavours to keep it within proper bounds, gave a timidity to my looks and whole carri-

carriage, which made her, I thought, uncommonly attentive to them.

Her ſweet eyes told me that they beheld me with a ſatisfaction I had never before obſerved in them: her voice was ſoftened when ſhe ſpoke to me, and ſhe, without the leaſt invitation, put her pretty arm through mine, while we were walking about together.

I ſtrove to keep up this winning behaviour till we got home, very early in the evening, that I might execute the other part of my deſign.

As ſoon as we arrived, I aſked her to take a turn in the garden.

By imperceptible degrees I drew her towards my aviary, which, being planned in a new ſtyle, has really a very happy effect.

She ſtarted with ſurprize; and her ſurprize increaſed while ſhe continu-

ed her walk through the ſpots adorned and harmonized by the new inhabitants: and I obſerved with no ſmall delight, the tranſport which ſparkled in her eyes upon the occaſion. Looking at me with the tendereſt gratitude, ſhe took my hand, kiſſed it affectionately, and ſaid, "How much trouble have you taken, my dear Mr. Frankly, to pleaſe a poor girl who has hitherto been ſo undeſerving of your love; but ſhe will *indeed* ſtudy to be worthy of it, if you can prevail on yourſelf to forgive what's paſt!"

"There's nothing to forgive, my dear Griſſy," ſaid I, claſping her in my arms, "let me but ſee that charming face arrayed in ſmiles, and let me only be convinced that you are really happy—I aſk no more."

"I am happy, truly ſo," replied ſhe:

ſhe: "I cannot be otherwiſe while you are ſo kind: but I muſt reflect with concern on what is paſt. If a ſincere confeſſion of my ill-conduct, however, will make the leaſt atonement for it, I am ready to own all my faults."

"You have no faults, my dear girl," ſaid I; "you are every thing I can wiſh for."

"But I have been very wrong," anſwered ſhe, "and am quite aſhamed of myſelf. I wanted to be adored like Lady Camilla, not conſidering the prodigious difference between us; between ſuch an ignorant creature as I am, and ſuch an accompliſhed woman as her ladyſhip is; I ought alſo to have thought myſelf exceſſively fortunate in being reſcued from all the miſeries which I might have endured from loſs of

friends, and want of fortune, by your generoſity, which raiſed me, poor, young, deſerted as I was, to a ſituation ſo much beyond my expectations, ſo infinitely ſuperior to my merit: but I will endeavour to return your affection. The late proofs you have given of it, by leaving your friends, and devoting your time to me alone, have made me thoroughly ſenſible of your ſincere attachment to me, and have ſo deeply touched me, that I wiſh for nothing ſo much as to be capable of making you ſatisfied with my tenderneſs."

"*I am* ſatisfied, my dear girl," replied I, preſſing her to my boſom: "continue but in this humour, and I ſhall never complain."

While I ſpoke thoſe words, ſhe ſoftly ſtole her arms round my neck, and

and laid her dear face close to mine; and I gave her a thousand fond caresses, which she seemed to receive as if she was really transported at my behaviour to her.

She then proposed to me to go and look at the birds. She was so charmed with their different beauties, that she made a number of rapturous exclamations, which were not lessened when she separately examined them. I was her dear Mr. Frankly, her amiable Harry, the rest of the evening; and every day since I have found her carriage to me more and more affectionate and satisfactory.

Certainly, Bellville, if every man could purchase the heart of the woman whom he admired at so cheap a rate as I have done, there would be no despairing lovers in the world. Yet

I ought not to exult and compliment my own addreſs, ſince I am indebted to you for the hints which have proved ſo very ſucceſsful: and I dare believe that if I pay a due regard to your friendly admonitions, I ſhall preſerve the dear creature's heart for ever.

So far Mr. Frankly, whoſe behaviour confirms the maxim which I have ſo often and ſo ſtrongly inſiſted on, that no woman will behave amiſs to the man who treats her as ſhe ought to be treated. A good huſband will moſt commonly make a good wife: at leaſt, 'tis worth every married man's while to try to deſerve that epithet. Were the two ſexes more cautious in the choice of thoſe with whom they enter into the marriage ſtate, with reſpect to principles, temper, and a general ſuitableneſs,

bleneſs, there would not be ſo many unhappy couples complaining of their conjugal connections.

The very great uncertainty of being happy in the marriage ſtate, prevents many women from being deſirably ſettled, and induces an incredible number of men to keep miſtreſſes, merely becauſe they fooliſhly imagine they can throw them off at any time, when they are weary of them. But many a man has found, to his great aſtoniſhment and diſappointment, that an inſolent, extravagant, and fickle miſtreſs, has given full as much trouble and anxiety, as he could poſſibly have had with a wife. A wife, if properly uſed, will, for her own reputation as well as for her huſband's honour, keep at leaſt within the bounds of decency, and may, by an affectionate and diſ-

creet

ereet conduct on his part, be brought entirely to a right ſenſe of her duty, ſhould he be ever inclined to deviate from it.

LETTER LV.

Lady CAMILLA BELLVILLE to Mrs. BURTON.

STILL more encomiums on my huſband, in an age too when ſuch encomiums are ſo unfaſhionable! But I fancy the reaſon is, that the women are not married to the men of their choice. I will, however, allow that there is an appearance of indelicacy in ſuch a proceeding.

ing. Yet, after all, why ſhould we not, in an affair of ſuch very great importance to our happineſs, chuſe freely? But would our happineſs be more firmly ſecured by our free choice? Might we not fix upon a man who could not like us, and then we ſhould meet with a double mortification? And does not every agreeable woman ſtand a chance of being choſen by an agreeable man? And if he is not ſo, is ſhe not at liberty to refuſe him? Aye, and two or three more who offer themſelves, until ſhe meets with a man whom ſhe can like:—Fathers and mothers ſeldom drive their children to marry, totally againſt their inclinations—When once a woman is ſettled with the man ſhe loves, does ſhe not diſcover the greateſt indelicacy, the greateſt depravity indeed, by growing fickle, capricious,

capricious, and fond of vanity? Is ſhe not guilty of the very faults of which we ſo much complain of in the men? How odious! how infinitely more odious, are *ſuch* faults in a woman. Levity in a woman can never be long pleaſing to any man, and as it is generally deſtructive of that eſteem, which is the only ſolid foundation of love, there can be nothing urged in its defence; not the ſlighteſt apology can be framed for it. Nay, ſhould a huſband change ever ſo much after marriage, ſhould he give ever ſo many proofs of his inconſtancy, a licentious behaviour in his wife will be of no ſervice to her: inſtead of affording her the falſely expected relief, it will only make things a thouſand times worſe. She can never hope, rationally hope, to recall him by ſuch a behaviour; ſhe

ſhe only degrades herſelf in his eyes, in the eyes of the world, and if ſhe has a juſt idea of her ſituation, in her own. I cannot tell, indeed, how a woman feels, who, being fondly attached to one man, flies immediately, when *he* diſcovers any indifference with her, to receive conſolation from an attachment with another: I only know that I never was, that I never can be, of ſuch a diſpoſition. Were my Charles to leave me for another woman, I ſhould rather, I am very certain, endeavour to avoid the whole ſex, than liſten to the addreſſes of any other man. It is pretty clear, however, that in this reſpect I differ from ſome of my acquaintance.

Theſe reflections were occaſioned by the conduct of a lady, who lately came to be my neighbour.

Lord

Lord Lovedale, I believe I have told you, has bought the eſtate which was Sir William Joliff's. He has furniſhed the houſe, in a manner, uncommonly elegant; the gardens are laid out in a fine taſte, and all to pleaſe a very beautiful young wife, of whom he is paſſionately fond, and whom he, on account of her beauty, entirely raiſed to the rank and affluence which ſhe now enjoys. As ſhe was born and bred a gentlewoman, her father could not ſpare her any fortune.

Bellville and I are not deſirous of new connections; but we could not politely refuſe to make Lady Lovedale a viſit, eſpecially as my lord, who had met Bellville, deſired the pleaſure of his acquaintance.

We went therefore to make our viſit. I had heard a great deal about Lady

Lady Lovedale's beauty, but it exceeded all my expectations. It is needleſs to enter into a deſcription of every feature, it will be ſufficient to tell you that ſhe is the moſt elegant figure you can conceive—She has the moſt expreſſive countenance you ever ſaw. Expreſſion of what? you will aſk. Of love, of joy, of every thing delightful: her attitudes were all attracting, all her looks alluring; and ſhe diſcovered ſuch an infinite number of graces—more graces than I ever, I think, diſcovered in any other woman. They all ſeemed pointed at my Charles, for there was no ſtranger, except him, preſent: beſides, the attention with which ſhe beheld him, and the very particular civilities which ſhe paid him, obliged me to conclude, that ſhe wiſhed at that time, chiefly to draw

draw *his* admiration to herſelf; and I believe ſhe was quite ſatisfied, as her ſucceſs appeared to be anſwerable to her wiſhes. My dear Charles, indeed, inſenſibly ſhewed in his face the pleaſure which he took in looking at her, and liſtening to her. I could not, I confeſs, blame him for feeling ſo much pleaſure in her company, for I, myſelf, though a woman, found her perfectly enchanting. However, I muſt alſo confeſs, my dear Mrs. Burton, at the ſame time, that I ſecretly wiſhed ſhe had not come to live quite ſo near me; and that wiſh ſprung up in my boſom on happening to paſs one of the glaſſes in the ſaloon.

We made rather a long viſit, for Lady Lovedale found ſo many ways of engaging Bellville's attention, that he

he did not give the leaſt hint of taking his leave until it was late.

When we were in the coach, I expatiated largely on the beauty and elegance of the lady whom we had quitted.

He returned only a ſhort and vague anſwer, and then remained ſilent.

His behaviour, I own, alarmed me: I feared that his gentle, ſuſceptible heart, had been more affected than it had ever been, but on *my* account; and I began to conſider what would be the moſt likely method to cure him. A total ſilence with regard to my ſuſpicions, and the perpetual appearance of good humour, ſeemed to be the methods I ſhould have recourſe to. I availed myſelf of them, and I had the pleaſure to ſee him, ſoon after we came home, reſume his uſual chearfulneſs. Yet

before

before we retired to reſt, he told me that Lady Lovedale had deſired him to drive her in my lord's chaiſe, the next day, to Mr. Elm's, at the *Grove*, as my lord was particularly engaged.

I ſaid nothing, but I thought the more: ſo ſudden, ſo uncommon an intimacy with ſo lovely a woman, I did not like; and I was not happier when I ſaw my Charles dreſs himſelf with unuſual care. She was, I found, to ſend the chaiſe for him, and he went every moment to the window, as if impatient at its delay, though the appointed hour was not come.

By this behaviour of Bellville's, I was hurt in a manner which I cannot deſcribe. So new a behaviour ſhocked me extremely. It was with the greateſt difficulty that I ſtifled my ſighs.

ſighs. I took up a book to amuſe my mind, but it would not do. I knew not a ſyllable of what I read—I ſat down to my tambour, and ſtruck the needle in the wrong place, while I ſtole a glance at the lovely figure of my Bellville. He cannot eſcape, thought I; he is too handſome not to have charmed Lady Lovedale, as much as ſhe has charmed *him*. I could hold out no longer. I roſe haſtily to leave the room, that he might not ſee how much I was affected.

He ſeized my hand as I paſſed him.

"Where are you going, my Camilla?" ſaid he.

"Only into the next room," replied I, turning away my head to hide my emotions, which I am ſure he did not perceive, for he immediately

ately ſaid, "I will go with you, and write a card to Lady Lovedale."

I ſtarted. I coloured. My face was in a glow.

"A card!"

"Ay, my dear; I have changed my mind: I had rather decline this party; I muſt write an excuſe."

He then ſat down before I could make a reply, and wrote the following lines:

"Bellville's compliments to Lady Lovedale—ſomething has juſt happened, unforeſeen, which will prevent his having the pleaſure of attending her Ladyſhip to-day, agreeable to her appointment."

I longed to ſee what he had written, but I ſtood at a diſtance until he gave it to me. I read it with tranſport, caught the ſweet hand ſtretched out to me, and put it to my

my lips. He received this proof of my tenderneſs with his uſual affection, and afterwards rang the bell for a ſervant to carry the card.

"Now, my dear Camilla," ſaid he, "we will go into the garden."

I accompanied him. Nothing paſſed on either ſide relating to the above-mentioned ſcene. He was all good humour, and I was as happy as ever.

When John came back, he gave a ſealed note to his maſter.

My Charles read it twice, and then advancing with it in his hand to me, ſaid, "Now, my deareſt Camilla, I am going to truſt you with a great ſecret; a ſecret with which you ought to be acquainted, ſo my love tells me. I was ſtruck yeſterday with the beauty of Lady Lovedale, and pleaſed with her particu-

lar politeneſs to me; though I thought that her appointment for to-day rather a precipitate proceeding, on ſo ſhort an acquaintance. I was fooliſhly elated with the diſtinction ſhe paid me; yet I was not ſo ſenſible of it, until I found that I had taken more than ordinary care about my dreſs, and that I waited with a degree of impatience, quite unuſual, for a ſecond interview. Theſe new ſenſations ſurpriſed me, and I began, in conſequence of my ſurprize, to queſtion myſelf about the meaning of them. On reflecting over and over upon them, I diſcovered that they had not been occaſioned by the charms of her perſon, or the vivacity of her behaviour; but by the ſingular attentions of a fine young creature to *me* alone—This diſcovery made me ſee myſelf in a very ridiculous light.

light. I therefore determined to put a ſtop to any encouragements from the lady, and her card will convince you that I have acted a prudent part."

"Lady Lovedale's compliments to Mr. Bellville; from his figure and behaviour at their firſt meeting, ſhe had entertained ideas very much in his favour. She is greatly diſappointed to ſee herſelf ſo groſsly miſtaken. She will not, however, condemn him unheard—She permits him to apologize for his conduct to-morrow. He will find her at home all the morning."

I returned the card with tears of tranſport, and could only tell him, that he was too good for me.

"That is impoſſible, my love," replied he; "but I would adviſe all perſons who are going to commit an

action of which they do not entirely approve, to ſtop, and to reflect ſeriouſly upon the conſequences with which the commiſſion of it may be probably attended. Many of us, by ſuch a procedure, would, I fancy, eſcape a great deal of diſquietude, and ſave themſelves from criminal, as well as contemptible, ſituations.

" I was, I own, ſo taken with the beauty of Lady Lovedale's perſon, with her winning manners, and with her very attentive behaviour to me, that I had no conception of the extreme impropriety of her carriage, until I found myſelf too much agitated about it. I was then alarmed: by thinking of conſequences, I was alarmed—and I, at the ſame time, beheld this woman in her true colours. Had ſhe been innocent, I might have been

been in danger——In danger! No—For her virtue and her diſcretion muſt have prevented her from diſcovering any ſingularity in her behaviour to *me*; a ſingularity by which ſhe ſtrongly attracted my notice; but as ſoon as I detected the motives by which ſhe was actuated, ſhe became odious in my eyes. I hope, my dear Camilla, added he, that I have not ſaid or done any thing to give a moment's uneaſineſs to your gentle boſom—For the future you need not ever diſtruſt me—The virtuous woman, however lovely, however alluring, will never make improper advances: the *female libertine* muſt always appear to *me* a deteſtable character."

I will not repeat the praiſes I beſtowed on him for ſo virtuous, ſo *unfaſhionable*, a conduct. Were all huſ-

huſbands like *my* Bellville, there would not ſurely exiſt a *diſſolute wife*.

I am,

My dear Mrs. Burton,

Your's, with my uſual ſincerity,

CAMILLA BELLVILLE.

FINIS.